

Twentieth-century Christianity.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY
CHRISTIANITY

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

BY

FRANK BALLARD

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"HAECKEL'S MONISM FALSE" "THEOMONISM TRUE" "THE TRUE
GOD" "CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS" "DOES IT MATTER WHAT A MAN
BELIEVES?" "THE PEOPLE'S RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES" "‘EDDYISM’:
A DELUSION AND A SNARE" "DETERMINISM: FALSE AND TRUE"
"THE MIRACLES OF UNBELIEF" "DOES FAITH NEED REASONS?"
"WHY NOT MODERN UNBELIEF?" "CHRISTIANITY AFTER THE WAR"
"CHRISTIAN REALITY IN MODERN LIGHT" "CHRISTIAN THEISM
JUSTIFIED" "REALITY IN BIBLE READING" "THE MYSTERY OF
PAINLESSNESS" "CHRISTIAN TRUTH CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER"
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TO
MY SON
ROBERTSON BALLARD
IN LOVING AND THANKFUL APPRECIATION
OF HIS DEVOTION
TO THE REAL GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

025166

“You will know the truth, and the truth will
set you free.”

JESUS.

“Whatsoever things are true.”

PAUL.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

I

INTRODUCTION

It is a favourite notion in some quarters, not seldom endorsed on high authority, that the difficulties in the way of Christian faith have largely passed away with the nineteenth century. The assertion indeed is becoming common in pulpits and religious periodicals, that whereas rampant disbelief and crass materialism had their way during the Victorian period, the twentieth century has dispelled them as the rising sun scatters a fog. So that now the night of unbelief is over. We are told that materialism is dead ; that the new psychology has given it its *coup de grâce* ; that science is now opening out a spiritual realm ; and that all religion has to do is to enter in and take possession. A sweeping revival of Christian faith is to be expected in all directions.

All this, however, despite its sincerity, is but another case in which the wish is father to the thought. It is based upon partial and superficial observation. The flood which a few years since overwhelmed Paris, was not nearly so fraught with ill-effects as the noxious deposit which it left behind. Nor was the iconoclastic campaign of Mr. Bradlaugh and his co-workers, in the nineteenth century, so destructive of Christian faith, as that which has since

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developed in forms as much more deadly as more silent, insidious, and widespread. At the present moment—so says the learned Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford—nine out of ten of the adult population of this country are out of touch with all the Churches. But why? A variety of reasons may be truly alleged—social, practical, democratic; but assuredly also intellectual, or rational. Apart from the Churches and elementary schools, the Bible is ignored; Bishops are heard with impatient criticism; the priest's *ipse dixit* counts for nothing; the general assumptions of Christianity are regarded with suspicion; its ethics are accounted optional; its sanctions treated with growing indifference; to say nothing of the ceaseless propagandism of a clever and implacable "Rationalism," and a downright anti-Christian, atheistic Communism. These influences are quite as real, and as influential, as wireless broadcasting or aviation. Yet, strange to say, the Christian preacher or teacher, who sees that to meet all such asphyxiating elements of the modern atmosphere, something more is needed than a blameless life and worthy character, and that the mere fervour of appeal without rational basis produces little effect, thanks to the diffusion of modern knowledge, will find himself often amid an ignored minority. Not seldom he will be ploughing a lonely furrow. It is a psychological curiosity that of all the tasks which a Christian minister may set himself for the good of his human environment, the most thankless, and least appreciated, will be any attempt on his part to lay stress upon "Christian evidences"; that is, to set forth reasons for faith in the light of to-day. Just as the "Christian Evidence Society"—which one would have thought would have received, as it deserves, the utmost support from all the Churches—is least known or appreciated of all the religious Societies, and has to attempt the most necessary and difficult work with scanty funds and partial recognition.

Be that as it may, the problems of faith remain, and become at once more intricate and pressing for every generation. If Christianity is to become the final world religion, rather than that of a mere esoteric society, these problems will demand greater heed than ever as the years pass on, by reason of the ever-increasing development of education on all hands, and the mental effects of such development upon young and old, rich and poor, which are neither prevented nor healed by all the ordinary efforts or Sunday services of all the Churches in Christendom. So it comes to pass that no Christian teacher possessed of head and heart, can meet all the obligations thus thrust upon him in the way of holy duty, without being compelled to give constant and careful heed to almost every realm of thought and life. Whether, in the end, he can ever become much more than a mere smatterer or otherwise, in any one of the realms of theology, criticism, science, literature, history, which open out before him, he is driven, in such real measure as he can command, to concern himself with them all. An honest combination of ordinary intelligence with open-minded sincerity and earnest application, through many years, ought, therefore, to bring him some clear convictions, and put him in possession of some real truth concerning the Christian religion and its relations to human life. Otherwise, the ancient query of the bewildered disciples—"Who then can be saved?"—becomes a veritable wail of despair for modern times.

And yet, surely, the old adage *quot homines tot sententiæ* was never so vividly, measurelessly, irresistibly, true as to-day. However little sympathy one may have with that attitude of critical disbelief which arrogates to itself the title of "Rationalism," the fact cannot be concealed, nor its influence questioned, that there is in our modern midst more division of opinion, openly pronounced, as to what constitutes the real meaning and worth for humanity,

of religion in general, and Christ's Gospel in particular, than ever before. The very sincerity and intensity of the growing desire for a united Christendom, does but serve to throw up into more serious and sometimes apparently hopeless prominence, the wide differences of both belief and practice which abound throughout the whole of what is termed "Christendom." Bishop Henson has said, truly enough, that "unless preachers can assume Theism and moral responsibility, the proclamation of the Gospel becomes a mockery." That is manifestly beyond controversy. But two notes thereupon are inevitable.

First, such assumptions certainly cannot be made in regard to the ever-growing number of those who are out of touch with all the Churches. For amongst these there is an increasing host—even in this "Christian" country—of men and women who, with more or less intelligent conviction, deny both. As already intimated, the pleasing avowals in some religious quarters that—"The period of intellectual materialism has at last come to an end"—is but pious fiction, a well-meant untruth based upon lack of observation. Both the scientific materialism which definitely denies Christian postulates, and the practical materialism which acts as if that denial were well-warranted, are as real as heretofore, and make up in extending influence for what they seem to lack in definite intensity.

On the other hand, amongst the Churches which avowedly accept both Theism and moral responsibility, it is all too plain that beyond such acceptance, and a general acknowledgement of elementary Christian ethics, there is little agreement in anything else. If we leave out of account, for the moment, the other ten "living religions" enumerated by Dr. Hume in his "historical sketch," as well as all those smaller sections of Christendom which are no more numerous or generally recognized than Faraday's "Sandemanians," we are driven to acknowledge that the

Christian faith, in these realms, is represented by at least as many distinct differences of doctrine and practice as the following names imply: Anglicans, Romanists, Free Churches—including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and several branches of Methodists—Unitarians, Plymouth Brethren, Christadelphians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Russellites, Eddyists, Friends or Quakers, besides all who are enrolled in the "Salvation Army." With the exception of Theosophists, for whom any faith suffices to form the basis of religion, all these claim to be not only generally religious, but definitely Christian. Why, then, all these distinctly varying sections? What are the differences that divide them? Are they mere trifles of taste, or temperament, which amount to no more than variations in the framing of some one great picture or the many coloured fringes of a royal robe?

Alas, there is no room for either hesitation or qualification in the negative reply. They differ one from another fundamentally, unmistakably, emphatically, irreconcilably. In everything except just the Theism and moral responsibility to which Bishop Henson referred, they stand definitely apart. In what sense, then, are they Christian? However charitable, or uncharitable, may be their estimate of each other, it is plain beyond question that either nine-tenths of them are not really Christian—or Christianity must be understood to cover indeed a very wide and varied field.

Again, therefore, two conclusions present themselves to clear vision. First, it is more and more certain that Christian "unity," in any sense approaching uniformity of thought, or practice, between all these varieties of believers, is utterly and permanently impossible. Any genuine *rapprochement* as to creed, with consequent ritual and behaviour, between Anglicans and Romanists, Evangelical Anglicans and Anglo-Roman Catholics, Methodists

and Unitarians, Baptists and Salvationists, Presbyterians and Christadelphians, is unthinkable. What is sometimes denounced as "denominationalism"—which applies quite as truly to Roman and Anglican sections of Christendom as to smaller communities—not only exists, but shows every sign of continuing to exist, if not to increase. Take, here, one statement only, as proof of all that this implies. Says Dr. Gore, in his latest work :¹

"There cannot, I am convinced, be a reunited Church, except on the basis of the Catholic creeds, and the acknowledgement of the sacramental principle, as well as the due administration of the sacraments, and the recognition of the episcopal succession as the link of connection and continuity in the Catholic body."

He may well add: "Here again, then, unity seems a long way off." For, with all respect for a good and able man, he misuses his terms. It is not unity that he has in view, but uniformity. Concerning which, many of us will say, with a conviction as intelligent and sincere and strong as his own, that it is quite as undesirable as it is impossible. I for one, frankly, flatly, and emphatically, repudiate every one of the conditions which he lays down as the *sine quâ non* of Christian unity. Very many will say in regard to these, what Dr. Inge says as to Rome's claim to supremacy: "We won't have it at any price."

And that with quite a light heart. For apart from the unattractiveness of the word "denominationalism," the ideal for which it stands, so far from being either repellent or dangerous, is the very essence of all life, whether natural or spiritual. The so-called "divisions" of Christendom need not, and ought not to evoke the Jeremiads uttered over them. Apart from sheer bigotry, which no ecclesiastical sophistry can ever make Christian, there is quite as much room for gladness as for sadness, in the many

¹ *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 352.

variations of conviction and practice which are sometimes even sneeringly dismissed under the term above quoted, or anathematized as "schism." So far as Christian truth and life are concerned, there is really nothing more repulsive in "denominationalism," than in the manifest and oft immeasurable unlikenesses which characterize the members of a perfectly happy family. Indeed one may truly say, *per contra*, that if in any such family all its members were of precisely the same build, completely alike in body, soul, and spirit, precisely similar in taste, temperament, and capacity, that house would be much rather a den of intolerable monotony than a happy home. Assuredly, whatever becomes of creeds and sacraments, forms and ceremonies, rituals and organizations, if there be any truth at all in the fundamental Christian doctrine of the universal divine Fatherhood, then the only God, to Whom Jesus always refers as "Father," but whose awfulness modern science so presses home upon us, no more objects to, let alone is angry at, the differing ways in which His children seek to love and serve Him, than any earthly father or mother is vexed at the varieties of method or manner in which their children express the love they cherish.

Unless Christ's whole life record is a fable, and His mission to humanity a delusion, the only really "fundamental" essential of Christianity is neither hard to find, nor difficult to understand. It is indeed impossible to misunderstand, so long as what is known as the New Testament is of any account. There are ultimately but two Christian essentials, namely, *truth* and *love*. The first of these was anticipated in the progressive revelation of the Old Testament, and summarized in the Psalmist's avowal: "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts." Following upon that, the all-comprehending assurance of Christ Himself is unmistakable: "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." That by "spirit,"

Jesus did not mean any mental abstraction, or ecclesiastical shibboleth, is sufficiently demonstrated in John's emphatic avowal that—"God is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God, and God abides in him." Whilst Paul, who at one time so earnestly bids us take into full account—"Whatever things are true"—strains all his powers of thought and speech to emphasize his declaration that without love, even the truth itself, in all its forms of knowledge, belief, and practice, is, comparatively, "NOTHING."

So then, in full view of all the "divisions" of Christendom, without any excess of either smile or frown, it would seem to be impossible to sum up the whole modern Christian situation in better terms than other utterances of the same Apostle. No plea for personal liberty of thought can be more unmistakable than his—"let every man be fully convinced in his own mind." But the practice of that conviction in all his dealings with others, whether believers or unbelievers, friends or opponents, is outlined with a clearness that only becomes more vivid and forceful with every passing generation. "Stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong; let all you do be done in love."

But even supposing that there does come to one, through the gradual teaching of the years, some worthy and inspiring vision of a real, broad-minded, large-hearted Christianity, equally true to the love of the great good God of whom Jesus speaks, and to the needs of bewildered and anxious humanity in these our days, what can he do with it? How can any one individual hope to make it real and clear to others, amid all the rush of the vast tide of thought and life which gathers in volume and increases in rapidity, almost every year? Unless he be one of the few whom transcendent genius empowers to make deep and far-reaching impression on his fellows, how can he be anything more than a mere straw in the great human current which

carries him along? Is it of any avail to try to count for something, even a little something, in the few short years of this mortal life? Can the sincerest intentions, allied with the most strenuous industry and the loftiest ideals, make his tiny contribution to the truth and love which the world so sorely needs, and for which the Christianity of the New Testament must ever stand, worth considering? Tennyson, we know, is well warranted in his reminder that

“ We pass, the path that each man trod,
Is dim, or will be dim with weeds ;
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ? it rests with God.”

But that is not the whole case. He who has learned anything at all of Christ's Gospel, does not live and labour for “ fame.” Nor does it any more occur to him to press to know how much his performance of duty is accomplishing, than in the army, during some great campaign, it is expected or permitted that the private soldier shall regulate his actions according to his own estimate of what they are worth. It is his to obey, not to estimate. “ The noble six hundred ” constitute his ideal :

“ Theirs not to reason why—
Theirs but to do, and die.”

And such obedience is understood to be his code both of duty and of honour. It can be no less so in life's conflict, when viewed from the Christian standpoint.

In the following pages there are, confessedly, some huge assumptions. They may be regarded as elementary, but they are none the less immense beyond estimate. The assumption of the being and personality of God, in face of all the scientific, moral, and metaphysical difficulties raised by modern thinkers, is bold indeed. Not less so is the assumption of the character of God as represented by Jesus Christ. For that, again, rests upon the assumption of the

unique inspiration of the Bible, including more especially the reliability and authority of the New Testament. Furthermore, it is taken for granted—in spite of all the controversy and mystery concerning “free will,” and the acuteness of the pleas on behalf of “Determinism”—that a man is a moral being, to whom, therefore, moral evil is possible; that men are verily sinners who ought—whether they do or not—to “worry about their sins”; because sin has real and terrible consequences both in this life and, for all human beings, also in a life to come when death is past. So that there is unspeakable need for some “salvation,” or “redemption,” from both.

The justification of these tremendous assumptions must be sought elsewhere. That they are justified, on reasonable grounds, is the basis upon which all that here follows rests. With such an attitude, all who consciously and intelligently bear the Christian name will agree. Those who disbelieve must be left to their own responsibility. The days have now gone by when a learned Anglican divine could be permitted to say that it “ought to be made unpleasant” to be an avowed Agnostic. No Christian advocate has any warrant for affixing a moral stigma to disbelief. The oft-quoted word :

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds,”

is abundantly justified in facts. But more than that. In numberless cases the attitude of Professor G. Romanes has been repeated. In the days of his disbelief he was as pronounced as honest. Said he :

“Undoubtedly we have no alternative but to conclude that the hypothesis of mind in nature is now logically proved to be as certainly superfluous, as the very basis of all science is certainly true. There can no longer be any more doubt that the existence of a God is wholly unnecessary to explain any of the phenomena of the universe,

than there is doubt that if I leave go of my pen, it will fall upon the table."

But as to the spirit in which he contemplated such a conclusion, and how far it was removed from the callous moral depravity with which some believers would credit all who disbelieve, let the same page from his *Thoughts on Religion* testify :

" I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness—when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is capable."

Much the same feeling is expressed in words which might here be quoted from the great continental sceptic, Strauss—" This sense of abandonment is something awful "—and from his English contemporary and fellow-unbeliever, John Stuart Mill. Or from the more recent frank avowal of Sir Francis Younghusband, in his pathetic volume entitled *Within*. If Christ be true, such as these are nearer the God of Whom he speaks, than thousands of superficial churchgoers who have never had enough real faith to doubt anything.

In plain truth, the real Christian can only differ intellectually from the non-Christian. The rest is beyond his judgment. But it is certainly incumbent upon him to justify his assumptions, in all their enormity. It is only under the deep conviction, after prolonged consideration, that such assumptions can be and have been justified, that their consequences in creed, character, and conduct, are frankly estimated in what here follows. If it is irrational to proceed upon assumptions which have not been or cannot be justified, it is both irrational and immoral to ignore the consequences of assumptions which are justified.

If the foundations of Christianity are truly reliable, then assuredly "all who profess and call themselves Christians" ought to be, in every sense and to the uttermost, true to what they avowedly accept. That is a platitude, indeed. But it is the platitude on which turns the whole future of humanity, no less than the character and destiny of individuals. For as modern science is compelling us, in view of the greatly needed and wonderful improvement in the national health, to re-value and utilise more fully our physical commonplaces of fresh air and cleanliness, so does the crying spiritual need of the age call more loudly than ever upon Christian Churches, and Christian believers of every grade, to leave their Shibboleths out of account, and actually follow Him whom they "call Master and Lord," Who said so unmistakably and emphatically: "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Whatever becomes of creeds or Churches, nothing short of that obedience will suffice to "save" humanity.

The sketches of the various sections of Christendom, and their tenets, which follow, are manifestly only vignettes; but their truthfulness is derived from many years of observation and experience. A good photograph which is "sharp" and clear will bear enlarging, but the enlargement only makes more prominent the main features. So would verbal expansion only throw up into stronger relief the special characteristics of each of these brief portrayals. It must, however, be clearly understood—though one hopes it would be understood without special mention—that the use of the term "perversions" does not convey any moral stigma. It simply indicates departure from the ideal found in the only authoritative records. Whilst both the alleged "perversions" and the estimates of "approximations" are, necessarily, no more than the writer's judgement concerning facts which every thoughtful watcher must test by his own scrutiny. It were worse than useless in

these days, and on such themes, for any man, however careful and sincere, to assume an attitude of dogmatic finality. The utmost he can do is to face all the facts to the utmost of his power, whether in religion or in science, honestly, and offer his reasoned conclusions thereupon as suggestions. These, if well warranted, cannot but bear fruit in the right direction. But if not, they will deservedly fade away into oblivion. The ancient legend concerning the Tower of Babel, taken at its utmost, represents but a trifle in comparison with the modern measureless, ever-increasing strife of tongues, in every realm of human thought. The logomachies of history, even including all that we now know concerning Greece and Rome, Egypt and the East, compared with the output of the modern press, were but as a little rivulet in a meadow beside the Mississippi. In such an ever-swelling tide of thought and speech on innumerable printed pages, any author may be well content if his little barque is not wholly engulfed by storms of criticism, or crushed out of recognition by opposing collisions. If what here follows should succeed in conveying but a modicum of valid and precious truth to hearts and homes that languish for it, the writer's pains will be sufficiently rewarded.

II

CHRISTIANITY—THE IDEAL

ALL history and observation testify that man is essentially and unquenchably religious. Out of many religions which have occupied his thoughts, the three supreme cults are Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. Of these, Christianity is in every sense the greatest, and emanated from the greatest personality. Latest statistics show that it has the greatest number of nominal adherents—as against frequent former assertions that Buddhists outnumbered all other devotees. At present, the most reliable figures are Buddhism 130 millions, Hinduism 217, Islam 234, Chinese, mixed, 300, Christianity 560. These numbers, though fairly reliable, are comparatively insignificant. The real question concerning religion must ever be, which includes the greatest truth, the greatest personality, the greatest influence for good? Each of these three greatest religions rests upon and is subservient to a commanding personality. But most of all is this true in regard to Christianity. The assertion that “Christianity is Christ,” is not an exaggeration, but a summary of what is inexpressibly true.

For the moment it is here assumed—what is elsewhere abundantly justified—that Christ was, and is, what the New Testament represents Him. The attempts of the modern Drews, Kalthof, Robertson, Brandes, school to dispute His historicity, have been sufficiently answered. Even by such an accomplished “Rationalist” as Dr. F. C. Conybeare ;

to say nothing of many equally competent Christian advocates. The Jesus Christ of the New Testament emerges more surely, more largely than ever, in the full light of modern critical scrutiny. That being so, Christianity, to deserve the name, can only be what He intended it to be. His intention can only be learned from the whole record of His person, teaching, character, example, together with His death and resurrection. For Him the essentials of discipleship were, the acknowledgement of His authority, His mission and message, with consequent love, service, trust, and hope. Into one great word He put the whole intended result of such discipleship—"eternal life."

That was not a quantitative promise of existence after death, for this He always assumed, but a qualitative assurance of a present benediction unmistakably expressed in His avowal: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it beyond all comparison."¹ That great word is no figure of speech, but the condensed nearest expression of inexpressible reality. The life that manifests itself in consciousness, is our most indubitable reality. It is equally the most insoluble mystery. It can no more be defined than denied. So far as our knowledge goes, life cannot be either analysed or created. It can only be enjoyed, or endured, or destroyed. For its enjoyment there are definite and irresistible conditions, namely, adaptation to environment. To ignore or refuse those conditions means death. The mission of Jesus was to make clear, sure, and operative, human adaptation to that divine environment which had been before His coming dimly apprehended at best, and grievously misrepresented at worst. "I am not come," He said, "to destroy the law or the prophets, but to complete them." Not to "fulfil," in the sense of answering to a prediction, but to

¹ John x. 10. For the true significance of *περισσόν* here, see Matt. v. 47.

fill to the full all that had been lacking in true knowledge concerning God and man, and their mutual relations.

Here is, indeed, the very pith and marrow of his whole Gospel—divine quality in human life. For well we know that life does differ in quality, even as light does in its intensity from dawn to noon. The quality of all life known to us is always measurable by two tests—appreciation of and response to environment. Think for a moment of the ascending grades of life in this series—grass, sheep, dog, boy, shepherd, statesman, scientist, philosopher, poet. The quality of life, in each case, is unmistakably found in its appreciation of and response to a higher, wider, larger, environment. Beyond the last, highest, of these grades of environment, human nature does not go. But where it stops, the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes in. For it proclaims, insists upon, makes real, the highest environment of all—God—in Whom, as Paul reminded the philosophers of his day, “we live, and move, and have our being.” But when Jesus declared that “God is Spirit,” it was the revealing of a divine environment such as no ancient poet, or prophet, or seer, had ever known. All that it meant was only unfolded in what followed; even the whole of that wondrous character, teaching, and example, which have moved humanity as no other, and culminated in the unparalleled, overwhelming avowal—“I and My Father are one.”

Real Christianity, then, is the adaptation of the human soul to the divine environment which Jesus reveals; with all the consequences which follow therefrom. The consequences which follow from adaptation to other lower human environments, are manifest enough. Some are bright and pure, happy and helpful, as witness life’s possible joys through health, beauty, friendship, love, inspiring social intercourse. But the environment may also be selfish, cruel, lustful, savage, vestigial remainders of animal

ancestry through evolution. The dire consequences of response to such environment have ruined human hearts and homes, drenched earth's fields with blood, and yet fill cities with suffering and misery. The real purpose of the Gospel of Jesus, is to redeem human nature from this lowest environment, with all its consequences, and make men not only conscious of the highest, but happily and blessedly at home therein, through whole-hearted response. The approach to such redemption in the progressive revelation of Judaism, Jesus neither disowned nor dismissed. Nor did He cast any scorn upon the sincere and oft pathetic attempts of other nations to "feel after God, if haply they might find Him." Very significantly He said—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold."

But with all that redemption means in tender and constant view, He put His whole message into one word—"The Father"—"The Father Himself loves you"—"He who has seen Me, has seen the Father." In the light of that Fatherhood He made no reference to the "ten" commands given through Moses, but made for ever emphatic His summary of all the commands which claimed divine authority, in two. Nothing that follows in the New Testament Scriptures can lessen the force of His emphatic avowal :

"The first of all the Commandments is—The Lord our God the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength. The second is like unto it—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets. There is no other Commandment greater than these."

These two were indeed already known to His hearers. But He took them from their Jewish context, and so interpreted them that they become as much more intense and comprehensive in His Gospel, as our modern knowledge of the universe exceeds that of the ancients. He not only

enunciated but justified this double categorical imperative which, if only accepted and obeyed, would turn all earth's hells into heavens, and, in the fullest sense, "save" humanity.

Taken by itself—"Thou shalt love"—is indeed only a pitiful contradiction in terms. The verb "to love" has no imperative mood. The love to order, of either God or man, is unthinkable. But the appeal of a valid and tender Fatherhood is another matter. "Father," as Jesus uses it, includes also Motherhood, in that it stands for all that is tenderest as well as noblest in the yearning of a parent's heart. Granted such a Heavenly Father, and unless human hearts are smaller and harder than those of the lowest animals, the first great command of Christ's Gospel becomes at once the most natural, most rightful, most potent imperative of all possible appeals to human nature. But if universal divine Fatherhood, then also, unmistakably and inevitably, universal human brotherhood. A brotherhood which, if realised, would no more need a "league of nations" to ward off war, than in any happy family there is need, morning by morning, that the children should sign a solemn agreement that they will not murder each other during the day. Paul was right beyond all contradiction when he wrote that—"The whole law is fulfilled in one word—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love works no ill to his neighbour." Love therefore is the Alpha and Omega of the Gospel of Christ.

The "eternal life" of which Jesus spoke, cannot be verbally defined; for like all life it is too real to be put into words. But also, like all life, it is known by its fruits. Wherever there is life there is growth. The highest, most useful, most beautiful forms of life, yield the most beautiful flowers and the sweetest fruit. So that the reality of that "eternal life" which is the very essence of Christianity, may be known by its fruit, although no theological definition

can express it. "The fruit of the Spirit"—in Paul's truly inspired description—"is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Verily "against such there is no law." Nor is there hope for humanity on any other lines. Such a Gospel, then, may be truly described, though not defined, as the keeping of Christ's second great command, by means of obedience to the first. "This commandment have we from Him that he who loves God, should love his brother also." That covers and includes all that redemption means. In face of these two "great commands," all else—literally ALL ELSE—in the Christian religion, is but a trifle. It is so comparatively insignificant that the greatest of the Apostles declared, with all possible deliberateness and emphasis, as noted above, that it amounted to NOTHING.

To put all this into other words, as simply and clearly as possible, ideal Christianity is a life based upon the acceptance of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, His person, character, and teaching, His death and resurrection, with the practice of His spirit, as these are set forth in the New Testament, when it is fairly interpreted by itself, in modern light. Nothing less than that can rightly claim, nothing contrary to that can truly deserve, to be accounted Christian.

Through all the ages Theology has been, and yet is, a matter of interpretation. It may be more or less true to the real Christian ideal. But certain it assuredly is, that Jesus did not come to inaugurate some fixed system of Theology, or establish any one form of Church government; but, according to His own reiterated statement, to promote the "Kingdom of Heaven" on earth, and so "save" mankind. Neither Theology nor Church government ever yet "saved" any man, nor ever will. Still less will they redeem civilization from its sins and sorrows, or bless the nations with abiding peace and hope. The

veritable essence of all ideal Christianity will for ever be found in Christ's own simple, comprehensive, sufficient appeal—"Come unto Me, and learn of Me." How far the professed Christianity of Christendom has responded to that appeal, or ignored it, remains to be considered. This is, however, beyond controversy—that the woes and wounds of the world to-day do not mean that Christ's Christianity has failed, but that, on the universal scale, it has never yet been tried. Nor does there seem at present to be any probability of such trial as He Himself suggested, when He said to those who followed Him—"If you love Me, obey My commands."

In any honest and thorough survey of modern Christendom, one is compelled, at the very outset, to acknowledge both the actuality and the extent of what can only be truly called "perversions" of ideal Christianity; misrepresentations of Christ's own intentions and commands. The following summaries are not oracular dogmatisms, but inferences which seem to be inevitable, from honest recognition of present-day facts, together with due regard for the records of history, and frank acceptance of the general reliability of the New Testament.

III

PERVERSIONS

IT is now more than half a century since Professor Seeley published anonymously the work entitled *Ecce Homo*, which at that time made no small stir in the religious world. It would not do so now, because

“ The thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the suns.”

The book which good Earl Shaftesbury declared to be “ the most mischievous volume that had ever been vomited out of the jaws of hell,” is now accepted as an illuminating and inspiring study of that human side of Christ’s character which is being more fully recognized and truly appreciated. The most familiar chapter in this work, and probably the most influential, is that entitled, “ The Enthusiasm of Humanity,” which certainly merits all the attention bestowed upon it. But at the close of that remarkable delineation, the writer draws an almost lurid picture of the average character of professing Christians, to the effect that “ the love of Christ does not, in practice, produce the nobleness and largeness of character which have been represented as its proper and natural result ”—but very narrowly and miserably the opposite. And then, by way of explanation, he sums up the whole case in these pregnant words :

“ This may be a just picture of a large class of religious men, but it is impossible in the nature of things that such effects should

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be produced by a pure personal devotion to Christ. We are to remember that nothing has been subjected to such multiform and grotesque perversion as Christianity. That is wanting for the most part which Christ held to be all in all, spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion."

If a Regius Professor of history at Cambridge is to be credited with apprehending the meaning of words, and definitely intending them, that sentence rings out, even more impressively now than then, as a direct challenge to the whole of Christendom.

Its indictment is either true or false; and represents either an age-long moral and spiritual tragedy, or the mischievous slander of a pessimist. Alas, to an unmeasured extent it is only too manifestly the former. That such an estimate is no mere cynicism of an anti-Christian opponent, may be shown in the title of the Bampton Lecture for 1907, by a cultured Anglican clergyman, examining chaplain to a Bishop—"The reproach of the Gospel—an inquiry into the comparative failure of Christianity as a rule of life and conduct, with special reference to the present time." That such comparative failure is as real as apparent, is borne out not only by the late gruesome and wicked war, but by very much that has followed since peace was proclaimed; as well as by the present condition of Europe, whether viewed internationally or nationally, politically or commercially, socially or individually. Myriads of thoughtful men and women, whether they style themselves "Rationalists" or not, are asking questions that cannot be stifled. Why did not Christianity prevent the late awful conflict? Why, at least, has it not brought to pass since then, a peace which deserves the name? Why does it not so move men's minds and hearts as to make both Locarno and the League of Nations for ever unnecessary, by a universal disarmament which would make war impossible? Why, when peace is assured,

should millions of men and women be wearing themselves to death to earn a living, whilst thousands of their fellows—not one whit better than themselves—have unlimited means and opportunities to spend their lives in lazy, luxurious selfishness? In a word, why, after some two thousand years of nominal Christianity, is the world of mankind apparently as far from what Jesus would have men be, as if He had never lived or died? We know how unwarranted is the sneer of the sceptic as to the “uselessness of two thousand years of Christianity.” The real tragedy is that what might have been, should have been, Christianity, has so often been what Professor Seeley called it. “Multiform and grotesque perversion” has only too sadly misrepresented Christ and His Gospel. Thus, just as in the immortal story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, all prescriptions failed to remedy the evil because they did not really copy the original, so have these perversions failed, and are failing still, to bring to pass that for which Jesus lived and died, and bade His disciples ever pray—“Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven.” Let us, therefore, face these perversions as frankly yet kindly, plainly yet calmly, as befits all the vast interests and responsibilities involved. In such an endeavour there will inevitably arise vast differences of judgement and strongly opposing convictions, but in the carefully considered avowals of one mind after years of closest study, there is no more thought of personal depreciation, than intellectual immodesty or spiritual conceit.

1. ECCLESIASTICAL

The first perversion which has obscured and nullified the Christianity of Christ must be termed Ecclesiasticism. The word is confessedly vague, and yet it is sufficiently definite to be fairly well understood by those who think

at all about religious matters. A brief statement of the case is supremely difficult; but the facts both of history and observation are too manifest to permit of much misapprehension. The general but truthful description of it, is the excessive stress put upon the idea and function of "The Church" as a divinely intended organization. It is ideally personified, glorified, and made to be an end in itself, rather than a means for accomplishing the great purposes of Christ's Kingdom. Three special features of this attitude call for notice:

(i) The apotheosis of the Church as a distinct entity, not only capable of ideal personification, but supreme and infallible, the perfect embodiment of Christ's intention, and the real significance of His Gospel to humanity. This conception finds most frequent and pronounced expression in not a few printed prayers in the Anglican Prayer Book, as well as in the hymns so often employed in public worship. Thus:

"The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation,
By water and the word;
From heaven He came and sought her,
To be His holy bride,
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

Again—

"See the Gospel Church secure,
And founded on a rock;
All her promises are sure,
Her bulwarks who can shock?
Count her every precious shrine,
Tell to after ages, tell,
Fortified by power divine,
The Church can never fail."

And again—

“ Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod.
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope, in doctrine,
One in charity.”

But one unquestionable fact alone suffices to check all this exuberant assumption. There is no such Church in existence. “ We are not divided,” is sheer mockery, when some sections of what can only truthfully and may be charitably called the Catholic, *i.e.* universal Church, take to themselves exclusively the name and function of “ The Church.” Rome, indeed, refuses to acknowledge any Church outside itself ; whilst precisely the same assumption is made by the Greek Church ; and by the most powerful and representative section of the Anglican Church. Each of these, in some essential respects, flatly contradicts the other. So that nothing falser can be said, or sung, than that they are all “ one in doctrine, one in charity.” Even when the great word “ catholic ” is rescued from the untrue, uncharitable, and audacious assumption by which Rome seeks to monopolize it—and, thanks to Protestant carelessness, and a subsidized Press, is apparently succeeding—the sections of the universal Church refuse to accept the Apostle’s ideal in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xii.). They deny that there can be equally valid, useful, and necessary, different parts of one living whole. Whereas Jesus said—“ I am the vine, ye are the branches ”—were ever “ branches ” all alike ?—the ecclesiasticism of each great section of Christendom claims itself to be the vine, and views askance, if not with scorn, the existence of other living branches. Hereupon Dr. Percy Gardner has spoken with succinct truthfulness :

"We must distinguish between the Churches which were early organized on a plan originally Greek, and the ideal Church. The organization was on an Episcopal basis, and was necessary under the circumstances. But it was the occasion of much perversion of history and of many sacerdotal inventions. The ideal society is called by Jesus 'the kingdom of heaven,' by Paul the 'body' or 'bride' of Christ; the notion of a visible Church dates only from the third century. Since the Reformation it has become impossible to define the limits of the visible Church; the various religious bodies representing different sides of Christianity."¹

(ii) It is sometimes said, when appeal is made to the New Testament as the final authority, that the New Testament did not create the Church, but the Church created the New Testament. Upon this two remarks will suffice:

First, there is enough truth in this avowal to make it dangerously misleading. Assuredly the Churches of the first two centuries did not create the New Testament; for the various portions which compose it sprang from the reverent love, the reliable memories, and the deep convictions of the first disciples; and were received, acknowledged, and confirmed, by the many Christian communities which sprang into existence through the Apostolic and early Christian propaganda. When, in the fourth century, it was necessary to speak with the authority of a Council, in the name of all the Churches, all that that Council did, or could do, was but to acknowledge what they found to be irresistible. Namely, the accumulated conviction that the books then included in the Canon of the New Testament were a reliable record of Christ's life and work, and a true statement of His and the Apostolic ideals.

But secondly, for a truly Christian estimate of Ecclesiasticism, there is no need to explore the origin of the New Testament, nor to investigate with meticulous care the opinions or comments of the "Fathers." If the Christian

¹ *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 518.

Church, as a whole, has preserved the New Testament for humanity, so much the more is it bound to accept as final and sufficient, New Testament authority for its ideals. What the Nicene or ante-Nicene Fathers thought, is as irrelevant as interesting. The Gospels and Epistles are in our hands, and speak for themselves. In so far as the Catholic Church, represented by all the Churches, has been the custodian of the New Testament, it has also passed sentence upon its own departure from the mind of Christ and His Apostles.

When one thinks of what ecclesiastical Christianity has been, and in some respects still is, the contrast so vividly drawn in Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night" flashes irresistibly and vividly across the mind:

" Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;
 Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
 That thus they all shall meet in future days ;
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear ;
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method and of art ;
 When men display to congregations wide,
 Devotion's every grace, except the heart !
 The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul ;
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enrol."

(iii) It may be said quite truthfully that the existence and function of the Church are necessary, and have been productive of great good. Without the Churches as organizations, Christianity would never have survived. As

a general statement that is doubtless true. Yet it leaves ample room for a double protest from the standpoint of the New Testament. Too much stress may certainly be laid upon organization, with definitely anti-Christian results.

Both practically and spiritually, there may be too much importance attached to the existence and worth of the Church as a protective institution. The danger of such excess, practically, may well be illustrated in the wondrous cathedrals and ornate buildings which have been erected, in the names of saints, for public worship. No one questions their impressive character and architectural beauty. Nor would one underestimate the reality of such pious sincerity as Ruskin found in them. But it yet remains, and is no fiction, that works of art extolled as symbols may become more really religious idols. The venerable associations of cathedrals may easily develop into worship of a building rather than of Him concerning Whom Paul said so plainly to the Athenian philosophers, that

“The God that made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men’s hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He Himself giveth to all, life and breath and all things. Being, then, the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and device of man.”

In our own day, when we read that the new cathedrals in Liverpool and New York are going to cost so many millions, and then remember the frightful condition of the slums of those great cities—and every other such city in Europe—with the multiplied pathetic appeals for rescue work, Children’s Homes, Foreign Missions, and similar Christian calls, it certainly seems as if Christ’s unmistakable and impressive word had been left out of account.

“The hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is,

when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers."

No cathedral on earth can be more sacred in its associations than was the Temple at Jerusalem, which Jesus here made secondary. All the utility, charm, and solemnising influence, of fine religious buildings may be acknowledged; but there is herein unmeasured room for the gentle Apostolic warning—"My little children, guard yourselves from idols."

Such an admonition is even more applicable to the spiritual ideal which the material building is supposed to symbolize. The time has happily gone by—or nearly so—when those who revere and love cathedrals, were wont to refer to other buildings for Christian purposes as "conventicles," or "meeting houses." But for myriads of avowed Christians the spiritual conception of "the Church" yet dwarfs and dominates all else, as intimated above. It is assumed—and sometimes asserted—that the real purpose of Christ's mission was to establish a Church which would be, through the mouthpiece of "clergy," an absolute, infallible, authoritative, and all-controlling teacher, concerning everything that could be truly deemed Christian or express the will of God towards mankind.¹ Such an assumption is not warranted by the New Testament. Dr. Percy Gardner has truly said, in his instructive *Exploratio Evangelica*:

"Jesus did not call the Society which He intended to found and did found, the Church, but the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' and the 'Kingdom of God.'"

Professor Seeley, in his *Ecce Homo*, also made clear in what sense Jesus used these terms. Moreover, as Dr. Gardner adds:

¹ On a recent occasion the preacher in the Sheffield Cathedral—not the Bishop—declared, with emphasis and vehemence, that the "clergy" were the "sole and appointed representatives of God to man, and of man to God." There is no trace of any such assumption in the New Testament.

"In fact, since the Reformation, it has become a sheer impossibility to define the limits of the visible Church. It is a mere question of opinion, of definition, of the use of words."

Too well we know how each of the three great sections of modern Christendom—the Roman, Greek, and Anglican Churches—claims to be THE true Church, and more or less scornfully ignores the other two. But again Dr. Gardner is thoroughly warranted in his reminder that

"The Church of which Paul speaks, as the 'bride' of Christ, the 'body' of Christ on earth, must not be confused with any visible organization."

Neither Gospels nor Epistles warrant the claims made by the organizations above mentioned. Least of all are the loudest and most exclusive claims of all, by the Romish Church, worthy of regard.

As to the Gospels, the two passages on which the vast hierarchical Romish structure is based, do not at all support it. Dr. Gardner's summary is entirely justified :

"No one who regards the Gospels from the critical point of view, can attach much value to the Roman citation of detached texts. And 'Apostolical succession' cannot be maintained as a fact of objective history."

The "critical point of view" is certainly, to-day, the only point of view for sincere and educated men. As to the two passages in question, namely, *Matt. xvi. 18*, and *xviii. 17*, which are the only occasions in which "church" is mentioned in all the Gospels, the following summary by Dr. Gardner is as conclusive as it is mild :

"In the Synoptists the word 'church' occurs but twice. It occurs in the commission to Peter, but in a context which certainly belongs to a time long after the Crucifixion. It also occurs in the command addressed to the disciples that if they had a complaint against a brother, they should, as a last resource, make complaint to the Church. As no one can suppose that Jesus in His lifetime set up an authority in His society to supersede His own rule, we must assume one of two things: either the passage is a later in-

assertion, suggested by early Christian custom, or else, if the phrase came from the Master, He merely intended to endorse a Jewish custom by which disciples were referred to the local synagogue.”¹

The falsity of the Romish interpretation of Matt. xvi. 18 has been often demonstrated ; and Mr. W. C. Allen, in his able commentary,² has truly paraphrased the meaning of Christ’s play upon the words :

“ Happy are you, Simon son of Jonah, because the truth to which you have given utterance was revealed to you by God Himself. Your name is Petros, and this truth is a rock (petra) upon which I will build My Church.”

Whilst in regard to ch. xviii. 17, the same writer’s words express the whole truth of the New Testament—“ The Church is the society of disciples of Christ who dwell in any place.” These, therefore, the only two Gospel references to “ church,” afford no basis whatever for inflated ecclesiastical assumptions.

As for the rest of the New Testament, it entirely confirms the above attitude. Thirty times “ churches ” are mentioned ; whilst in thirty more times, the word “ church ” is manifestly a purely local reference ; as Mr. Allen says. In regard to some such general reference as occurs in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Dr. Abbott has truly pointed out³ that the epistle was addressed to several Churches, and therefore an abstract reference to the Church as including them all, was inevitable. But the special feature of every reference is the close relation to Christ Himself. And this is precisely where the ecclesiasticism which so soon developed, became a perversion of His Gospel. To quote Dr. Gardner once more :

“ There can be little doubt that the Founder of Christianity intended to establish a Theocracy on earth. But how little the

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 484.

² “ International Critical Commentary ” Series, *in loc.*

³ International Critical Commentary on *Ephesians*, p. viii.

organization which came into existence corresponded to the teaching of the historic Jesus, we can see by turning to His words reported by Matthew: 'Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoso will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave.' If Jesus uttered these words, they prove conclusively that at that time He did not think of an organized and hierarchic Church."

However frankly the need of such an organization as the Church connotes may be acknowledged, history shows, all too plainly, how spiritually misleading may be its development. In other words, besides growing into a tyranny which assuredly Jesus never intended, it may also, in other respects, directly contradict His teaching and example as recorded in our Gospels. The term "tyranny" has been, alas, more than justified by facts. In a mild but real sense it is often true to-day. Especially in the discipline and procedure of the Romish Church. But it was far from mild in the days gone by. The history of the thousand years preceding the Reformation, is one long exhibition of it. But it was reserved for post-Reformation times to show, in the ghastly proceedings of the Inquisition and St. Bartholomew's, how immeasurable, in infernal cruelty, could be the contradiction to everything that Jesus had ordained. On a smaller scale Protestants, when they could, sometimes followed the diabolical example of Rome.

(iv) Those days are mercifully gone by for ever; but there are yet dangerous relics left. The modern atmosphere has abolished the rack and thumbscrew, and gives to every man, without fear of ecclesiastical interference, full liberty to follow his own religious convictions.¹ But

¹ But that the pitiful and unchristian bigotry of the past is not yet wholly extinct, is witnessed by the following just announced in the Press (Oct. 1926): "The facts are these. Recently a Mr. Martin,

no observant eye, however charitable, can fail to see how, even now, in some real respects, the largest, most closely-knit, most powerful organizations which claim to be "the Church," misrepresent the teaching and ignore the example of Him whom they call Lord and Master. In this country we are not concerned with the Greek Church, and may therefore leave it out of account ; although its hierarchical claims are on a par with those of the Romish and Anglican

a member of the ' Parish Association,' which sends preachers to isolated villages, came to the village to hold a weekday outdoor service.

" It began to rain, and Mrs. Bishop, an ardent Church worker, invited Mr. Martin to hold his service in her house. Those who attended included Mrs. Richardson, also a churchgoer, and a youth of seventeen, named Reggie Harris, who is the organ blower in the church.

" The next day the Rev. Harold Lawson, rector of Abbots Morton, visited the village school, and told the children that a terrible act of infamy had been committed, and endeavoured to learn from them who had attended the service.

" Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Bishop, and Harris then received letters from the rector. ' You,' said the letter to Harris, ' have committed a deadly act of schism by taking part in a weekday opposition service conducted by a man who has no authority from the bishop or myself. You must, therefore, on no account presume to help in any church by blowing the organ. We cannot have our music going up to heaven from one who has insulted God in His church.

" ' Perhaps you had no idea it was a sin, and if you like to come to me and say you are sorry, we will say no more about it.' "

To an inquiring Press reporter this Rector said :

" ' I maintain that my attitude was quite justified—that there is nothing in the letters which I would wish to withdraw, and that the three parishioners concerned have been guilty of the grossest sin.'

" The letters contained such sentences as, ' You have committed a deadly sin for which the Church's penalty is excommunication,' and, ' You have imperilled your immortal soul, which I, our Lord's duly appointed, have been given the care of. I must cite you before the bishop, who may suspend you from Holy Communion.' "

Churches. Concerning the former of these, a special note must presently be made.

For the moment, let us think of "the Church of England as by law established." It was undoubtedly, at first, an embodiment of the principles of the Reformation. But since the "Oxford Movement," Tractarian tendencies reverting to Rome have strongly developed, so that now a large and influential section loudly proclaim themselves "Anglo-Catholics," and scornfully disown the Reformation. Some of them constantly maintain their independence of Rome. Others are often seeking, though always in vain, some way of organic union with the Papacy. Here is indeed a pitiful spectacle, and a veritable perversion of Christianity. Two of the largest sections of Christian believers each claiming to be the only true Church, and denouncing each other, as well as all other Christians.

But even when the Anglican Church is taken at its best, that is, in its general acceptance of Reformation principles, there is yet room for some grave questioning. There can be no doubt as to the sincerity, nobility, scholarship, and devotion, of vast numbers in Anglicanism, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the humblest churchwarden. Nor is there any warrant for underrating the general influence for good which this section of the Church Catholic wields in this country. Yet the question remains, and demands honest answer, whether the ecclesiasticism of which modern Anglicanism is doubtless the best exponent, truly represents the mind of Christ, or is, to some real extent, a perversion.

The very mildest statement of its essential principles must include a hierarchy of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, constituting a distinct class known as the "clergy," and deriving special authority by virtue of episcopal ordination at the hands of bishops, in a definite "Apostolical succession." They are thus said to possess

unique powers and authority for the "administration" of sacraments, which are regarded as absolutely necessary to salvation. Does the New Testament endorse all this? It does not. The whole libraries which have been written on these themes, do not obscure its pages or confute the only reasonable deductions from them. Nor, as Dr. Robinson declares,

"does it in the least avail to urge that the four Gospels are only a sort of later addendum to the divine ideal and conception of the Epistles. If the Gospels do not give us a reliable record of the actual teaching of Jesus, Christianity is but a castle in the air."

But even when the Epistles are taken into the full account they merit, the hierarchical claims above epitomized cannot be deduced from them. *ἐπίσκοπος* does not mean "bishop," in its modern sense; *πρεσβύτερος* does not mean "priest"; the true word for "priest," *ἱερεύς*, is never once applied to any Christian official; *διάκονος* applies to any and every form of Christian service in the Church. The origin and development of the ecclesiastical significance of these terms, are only too easily traceable in early Christian history. The episcopal form of Church government undoubtedly has its advantages; and it is quite within the range of Christian liberty, that some true disciples should deem it the best of all. But when it is represented as being the only divinely-intended method of Church organisation, which ought to be made compulsorily universal—then it becomes a perversion of Christianity, and a misrepresentation of Christ's Gospel.

(v) Furthermore; some of the accompaniments of ecclesiasticism cannot but come under the same category. Neither the high-sounding titles, with inseparable assumption of superior dignity, which have been multiplied, nor the unique and often gorgeous robes associated with an

ornate ritual, which have come to be essentials of worship,¹ can by any subtlety of thought, or sophistry of speech, be reconciled with the simplicity of Christ's teaching and the Apostolic practice. To compare all this with the words of Jesus to the woman by the well, is to see indeed what "perversion" means. When, moreover, one reads such an utterance as is recorded in *Mark x. 35-45*, what can be thought of the fulsome appellations so familiar in conventional ecclesiastical Christianity? The introduction to the new Romish translation of the New Testament is addressed to "the most reverend, the Lord Archbishop." The Anglican form is much the same—"the very reverend, the Lord Archbishop." Even to an ordinary Bishop one is supposed to say, alike in public and private, "My Lord." One wonders what Paul would have said to such an address. Or rather one does not wonder, for we know. The common use of "Rev." for any Christian minister is no parallel, for it is merely a convenient form of announcement and entirely optional. In the daily press, however, quite recently, comes this typical note:

"Wearing a gorgeous robe of purple and gold, and speaking in English, the Most Rev. Dr. Germanos, the Greek Archbishop of Thyatira, preached at St. Luke's, Peckham, last night."

Such gaudy display and fulsome reference may please superficial minds and conventional tastes; but to call it Christianity is a manifest perversion—if, for one honest moment, the spirit and example of Jesus and His Apostles, is contemplated. It may well form part of "Churchi-

¹ A London daily recently contained an account of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, where the problem of the two congregations—which differ as to the significance of the Communion service—is solved by a choral "celebration" at ten o'clock, followed by Morning Prayer, with sermon at 11.15. The interval gives time for the Celebrant to change his alb, amice, stole, maniple, and chasuble, for surplice, scarf, and hood. In the Anglo-Catholic service there are vestments, mixed chalice, and the plainly discernible influence of the Missal.

anity"; but has nothing in common with ideal Christianity. All these conceits are of Jewish or Pagan origin, and have no more real place in the true Christian Church than they had in the thought, or speech, or life, of Jesus. The fact that for some seventeen centuries Christianity has been mostly represented by such ecclesiasticism, explains the "comparative failure of Christianity." The "Kingdom of Heaven" which Jesus came to establish among men, cannot and will not come on such lines. Whereas it is certain, beyond all contradiction, that if only the plain commands of Jesus, and the ideals of His Apostles, had been obeyed, the pages of Christian history would never have run red with blood, nor have been, what in some respects they are, the saddest of all records. The many lives of real saints who have shone like stars on a clear moonless night, together with much influence for good which may truly be attributed to the Christian Church as a whole, only serve to show what might have been, if all those who have, through all the ages, borne the name of Christian, had but been true to their Lord.

2. ROMANIST

Reference has been made above to Romanism as an ecclesiastical system which justifies the epithet "perversion," when compared with ideal Christianity. But there is something so distinctive and impressive about this particular organization, in modern no less than in ancient times, that it calls for further brief but plain consideration. It is true, as Dr. Gardner has said, that

"At quite an early period of Church history, the rulers of the Roman Church, in consequence of the ascendancy of the ruling city, and the statesmanship which they displayed, had attained a predominant position among the Churches, and ventured to interpose when they saw danger approaching any of their less firmly founded neighbours."

There is also sound warrant for his further impartial estimate :

“ Thus it is absurd to suppose that the position gained by the bishops of Rome was the result of mere grasping ambition and worldly vanity. It was the divinely appointed means whereby a certain unity was secured to the Church.”

Just as, in our own time, no one would deny that the Roman Church includes vast numbers of sincere, devout, and devoted believers, and exercises unmeasured influence in the world. In its wonderful and potent organization are found very many who, for scholarship, devotion, and nobility of character, are at least equal to any in Christendom. And yet—until and unless the whole New Testament is to be left out of account as it was really during the Middle Ages, or smothered under heaps of patristic traditions—there can be no other verdict for an honest, open mind, than to pronounce Romanism a perversion of Christ’s ideals and intentions.

The barefaced falsity of its dogged assumption in seeking to monopolize the term “ Catholic,” has been noted above ; but it is only too consistent with Rome’s general attitude. The alleged historic basis for this ecclesiastical bigotry, in the “ supremacy of Peter,” together with the “ Apostolical succession,” have been disproved by competent authorities. Whilst the institution of “ the Papacy,” however naturally it may have originated in the central position and influence of the earliest Roman Church, yet issued in such a frightful succession of unworthy characters, that with but a few noble exceptions, the “ lives ” of the Popes and cardinals have been scandalous enough to bring utter disgrace upon any Church associated with them. Mr. Jos. McCabe’s volume, *The Popes and their Church* ¹ is indeed a terrible indictment. But it comes from one who has known Romanism intimately from within, and is not open to

¹ Published by Watts & Co.

contradiction in its main drastic allegations. It is said, indeed, that those days have departed, and that the characters of recent Popes and Cardinals are all that can be desired. But whether this be so or not, the fact remains that the main doctrines and practices for which Rome stands, are not only entirely contrary to the New Testament, but are reiterated still, with a rigid dogmatism which prevents any hope of correction or improvement. Its bitter hatred and denunciation of modernism¹ proceed upon the assumption that it, and it alone, represents what Dr. Gardner calls "the way of absolute religion." That is,

"The view that Christianity was sent into the world fully equipped and complete, supported by a series of miracles, and not to be approached by the ordinary principles of reason which we apply to other practical affairs of life."²

Such a "view" is not merely contradictory to all rational principles—whether they are called "modernism" or not—but is plainly contrary to the whole teaching and attitude of Christ Himself. When, moreover, persistent emphasis is laid upon such essentials of Romish doctrine as Transubstantiation, priestly absolution, Mariolatry, celibacy of the clergy, Sacrifice of the Mass, Papal infallibility and supremacy, it is not enough to say, carefully and deliberately, that all these are conspicuous by their absence in the New Testament. As such, they must always remain, unchanging and unchanged, the distinguishing characteristics of Romanism. This is Father Woodlock's most definite and unqualified avowal. But fallacies which are not open to correction, and misrepresentations which are declared to be for ever binding, constitute the very essence of perversion, whether in relation to Christianity, or anything else.

¹ The latest expression of this is found in the volume by Father Woodlock, entitled *Modernism and the Christian Church*.

² *Op. cit.* p. 519.

So manifestly contrary to New Testament teaching is this whole Romish scheme, that as long as was possible the Bible was necessarily kept from the people. Now that the modern atmosphere makes that no longer possible, the authorities, with unblushing effrontery, trample their boasted "*semper eadem*" under foot, and actually issue a new translation of the New Testament, as being anxious that ordinary people should read it for themselves! This "Westminster version of the sacred Scriptures" purports to be an adequate "Catholic" rendering. But apart from the impudent mendacity of the assumption of the great word "Catholic," the aim of this effort is well expressed in the preface: "This translation is not intended to serve the purpose of a commentary, but notes have been added where they seemed required in obedience to the laws of the Church." Both the renderings and the notes do truly exhibit Rome's ecclesiastical astuteness. But it is a suicidal effort. All the Jesuit sophistry of the comments, and adroitness of the renderings, cannot and do not, obscure the fact that in the light of the New Testament, the whole Romish system is a perversion of Christ's Gospel, and a misrepresentation of His purpose. Romanism no more represents the Christianity of the New Testament than Eastern despotism represents the constitutional Monarchy of Great Britain. It is a somewhat remarkable and most significant coincidence, that the word which both Romanists and Anglo-Catholics regard with such scorn is, when simply split up into its constituents, the truest and completest succinct statement of the meaning and result of the Reformation. Thus "Protestantism" interprets itself. *Pro te stant i* (Jesu), *s* (salvator), *m* (mundi)—"They stand for Thee, Jesu, Thou Saviour of the world."

That is indeed the Protestant faith. By it Christianity stands or falls; and upon it alone, the true Catholic Church, rock-based, will stand firm against "the gates

of hell"—that is the oppositions or perversions of the ages.

3. SACERDOTAL

The extreme emphasis put upon the priesthood, with all its consequences, which distinguishes the Romish Church, is endorsed by Anglo-Catholicism—which ought rather to be termed Anglo-Romanism—and in a modified form is accepted by many others. Even amongst the Free Churches, there are not a few traces of it, and hankerings for it. What sacerdotalism really connotes is succinctly and truly stated by Sir Oliver Lodge :

“ Those who take what has been called the Apostolic view, necessarily exalt the Church, which is to them God’s vicegerent upon earth. For its priests possess a power denied not only to laymen but to ministers of all other denominations—who in this respect are and must be regarded as laymen. To the Roman, the Anglo-Catholic is a layman, even though he be a prelate. To a strict Anglican, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, or the Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod, may be in friendship a brother and in good works a helper, but he has no claim to recognition as a priest. Those who believe in the special and exclusive character of ecclesiastical priesthood, are bound to venerate the officers invested with those powers, and to submit to their teaching and influence, irrespective of their personality. For they can not only help and strengthen you by administration of the Sacraments ; they actually have the power of forgiving your sins—or, still more remarkable, of preventing the forgiveness of your sins, if they be so minded.

“ All other details sink into insignificance before this Episcopal pronouncement, which has been said ceremonially to every Anglican parish priest in the British Isles :

“ ‘ Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained.’ ” ¹

To all this doctrine, and all that it implies, no clearer, fuller, more unanswerable reply can or need be given,

¹ *Man and the Universe*, pp. 110, 111, 113.

than the well-known essay by Dr. Lightfoot, the erudite Anglican Bishop, in his *Commentary upon the Epistle to the Philippians*. A few words of his merit deliberate repetition :

"The Kingdom of Christ, not being a kingdom of this world, is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies political or religious. It has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all, it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe, or class, between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven.

"For communicating instruction, and for preserving public order ; for conducting religious worship, and for dispensing social charities ; it became necessary to appoint special officers. But the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people, are never regarded as transferred or even delegated to these officers. They are called stewards, or ministers of the Church, and the like ; but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only ' priests ' under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood.

"As to 1 Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11—in both alike there is an entire silence about priestly functions ; for the most exalted office in the Church, the highest gift of the Spirit, conveyed no sacerdotal right which was not enjoyed by the humblest member of the Christian community.

"An exclusive sacerdotalism, as the word is commonly understood, contradicts the general tenor of the Gospel.

"No distinct traces of such sacerdotalism are visible in the ages immediately after the Apostles.

"It is therefore to Gentile feeling that this development must be ascribed. Yet it would be vain to deny that a very different conception prevailed for many centuries in the Church of Christ. The Apostolic ideal was set forth and within a few generations forgotten. A strictly sacerdotal view of the ministry superseded the broader and more spiritual conception of their priestly functions. From being the representatives, the ambassadors of God, they came to be regarded as His vicars. Nor is this the only instance where a false conception has seemed to maintain a long-lived domination over the Church."

Such a testimony, from such a source, ought to suffice. But thanks to the fuller and more exhaustive scrutiny of

our Christian records, every passing year does but add emphasis to the endorsement of Dr. Lightfoot's witness. Deliberately, carefully, charitably, but unequivocally, one is compelled to avow that sacerdotalism, with all its appendages, is an utter perversion of Christ's teaching and intention. Its relation to "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" has been sufficiently considered elsewhere.¹ It is but the culminating point of the perversion which has to be repudiated, so long as that teaching and intention have any weight with His disciples. But the extent to which the associated attitude still prevails, is just now vividly illustrated in the conflict arising for Anglican Church authorities respecting the revision of the Prayer Book. It is said to have involved twenty years' "hard work," but the greatest difficulty relates to what is termed the "reservation of the sacrament." Here is one plain public statement which fairly represents the whole case :

"The June conference of the bishops broke up with the shadow of a serious split hanging over the Church.

"This arose over the rubric (already passed by the House of Clergy) which makes it legal perpetually to reserve the sacrament in church for the purpose of the communion of sick people and others not able to attend the service.

"There was great diversity of opinion among the bishops concerning the rubric, which is strongly championed by the Anglo-Catholics, and on a vote it is understood it could be carried by the Assembly.

"The Evangelicals, maintaining that it is a blow at the Protestant spirit of the Reformation, have threatened to do all they could to get Parliament to reject the rubric, and the Anglo-Catholics talked of breaking away if Parliament interfered.

"With varying emotions Church people have turned to the

¹ I must be content here to refer to my two outlines of the whole case—*Christian Truth concerning the Lord's Supper*, and the section on Sacraments in *Christian Findings after Fifty Years*—both published by the Epworth Press.

important judgment given recently by the Chancellor of the Liverpool diocese concerning the aumbry in a Southport church.

"The Chancellor allowed Reservation under safeguards which excluded Benediction and processions of the Host."

What is the real focus of all this pitiful strife? The assumption that by reason of certain words pronounced by a certain class of men called "priests," so definite a change has been wrought in the bread and wine used at this service, that they become charged, after the manner of a low tension battery in connection with a wireless set, with some special, magical, saving efficacy, which is to be communicated to the invalid or absentee by a visiting priest. That is the simple, real root of the whole controversy. And it is a purely sacerdotal assumption for which there is not the slightest warrant in the words or intention of Jesus, or in the teaching and practice of the Apostles. But it cannot be too plainly or emphatically declared, that the right or wrong of such "reservation of the Sacrament," the question whether it is a true representation or a perversion of the mind of Christ, must be decided, not by ancient councils, or patristic writings, or Church history, or ecclesiastical traditions, or meticulous exegesis of isolated passages, but by the total testimony and unmistakable tenor of those Gospels and Epistles to which the Christian Church has irrevocably pledged itself, from the third century until this day. On such principles it becomes as plain as the light of day, that sacerdotalism, with all its consequent sacramentarianism, is, in Dr. Lightfoot's words, "a false conception"—a perversion—of ideal Christianity.

4. DOCTRINAL

Quite recently, the Bishop of London has publicly declared that one of the "six things which are chaining

down and oppressing the human race," is the "sense of being enslaved to a creed." From such a source, it is an utterance as surprising as true. For there is still a popular notion, which in days gone by was an absolute dogma, mostly derived from Christian teachers, that Christianity means strict adherence to what was termed "orthodoxy." In other words, that what the New Testament calls "salvation," depends upon the conformity of a man's beliefs to a certain theological standard. The supreme and indeed monstrous instance of this doctrinal perversion occurs in the Anglican Prayer Book, in what is called the "Athanasian Creed." Therein it is solemnly declared that "unless a man keeps" that bewildering verbal conglomeration, "whole and undefiled"—"without doubt he shall perish everlastingly"! How sincere and intelligent men could ever hold, and still persist in maintaining, such an awful misrepresentation and frightful perversion of Christ's Gospel, passes comprehension. No appeal to antiquity or venerable association, no plea for symbolic latitude, can in the least alter the force of such language, or justify its employment in Christian services to-day. The true thought of God as learned from Jesus Christ, absolutely rules out of consideration such narrow-minded doctrinal dogmatism.

Whenever the question is seriously asked—"Does it matter what a man believes?"—there must certainly be an unhesitating threefold reply. It does matter, unspeakably, to God, Whom Jesus reveals as our Father; to the man himself; and to his whole human environment. But that does not in the least degree warrant the suggestion that any one is, in the Christian sense, "saved" for the accuracy of his creed. Such a general statement, is made valid as long as the New Testament is of any value, by the unequivocal and unlimited avowal of Peter recorded in Acts x. 34, 35:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him."

The case of the Philippian jailer has been quoted, times without number, as a Christian summary. Thus the Revised Version says :

"He fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

But the real import of these words has been, and is yet, misrepresented through the persistent employment of archaic English. The rendering "shalt be" inevitably conveys the notion of being saved there and then, *for* believing. Whereas the real assurance, here as everywhere else in the New Testament, is that men are saved *in* believing. The difference is well brought out in Dr. Moffatt's rendering :

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they said, and then you will be saved, you and your household as well."

Upon such an utterance, the true and sufficient comment is in Paul's own words to the Galatians—"In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision"—which was the orthodoxy of that day—"nor uncircumcision, matters anything, but faith that works through love." It is the reality of a loving and obedient belief in the living Christ, not the precise accuracy of certain conceptions concerning Him, which works within the human heart and brings to pass those developments of Christlike character in which alone "salvation" consists. The well-known doctrine of "justification by faith" was necessarily emphasized both by Paul and Luther, under the pressure of sheer necessity as against Judaism and Romanism. But that emphasis has long been overdone, in meticulous theological definitions

which have greatly and sometimes wholly obscured the Apostle's unmistakable reiteration, that in Christ's true Gospel "neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." This "new creation" manifestly consists in passing from the "works of the flesh," which he has just recounted, to the "fruit of the Spirit."

Time was when the value of a man's faith was made to turn upon the query whether he was "sound" upon the atonement, or "sound" upon inspiration, or "sound" upon eternal punishment. But the truth has long been unmistakable that such soundness has nothing to do with a man's character. Through all the ages the Apostle's avowal in his letter to the Romans (Rom. ii.) has been plain and emphatic. No amount of accurate knowledge recommends any man to God, but only what he is, and what he does. However strongly and rightly the majority of Christian believers may hold the Trinitarian conception of Deity, it is none the less true that an honest and earnest Unitarian is nearer to God, and to all that "salvation" means, than a superficial and narrow-minded Anglican or Methodist. Whilst a sincerely convinced, devout, and devoted Romanist, in spite of all that has been said above concerning his creed, is more truly "being saved," than an indolent half-hearted selfish Protestant. The whole case is summed up for ever in Christ's own avowal—"Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven." After all, in the true and full sense of the term, "salvation" is by works—that is, obedient love and service—and not by words. Its essence is character, not creed. It comes to pass not magically by mere believing, but actually by living accordingly.

5. ESCHATOLOGICAL

One special portion of the doctrinal perversion of Christianity which is now happily moribund, though it has wrought immeasurable mischief in the past, belongs to the realm of eschatology; that is, relates to the post-mortem future of human beings. It is by no means yet extinct, especially in Romish teachings and publications, as well as in some "evangelical" declarations.¹ During the last fifty years it has been greatly modified. Pulpit references to it are now either conspicuous by their absence, or are hushed into a reverent minimum. But conventional orthodoxy dies hard. Formerly, there were four distinct elements of this perversion, namely, physical suffering, fixity of doom, its everlasting endurance, and, as a consequence, the comparative worthlessness of the present life. Salvation became a mere escape from everlasting hell.

(i) Up to and sometimes during the last half-century, the generally accepted Christian doctrine was, that after death human beings slept in unconsciousness until some far-off future awakening, when, in resuscitated bodies, they had to appear before a literal judgement-seat, and be apportioned, some to endless bliss, and others to endless torment. The gruesome representations of Dante's *Inferno* were, for the wicked, regarded as more literal than figurative; and it was assumed that eternal perdition awaited those who died outside the pale of the Church. The Romish doctrine of "extreme unction" was an ecclesiastical invention to ward off this fate. On the other hand, the descriptions of heaven were almost as sensuous as the Islamic Paradise, even if somewhat more refined. Mention of "fire and brimstone" in the last portion of the New Testament, was taken by myriads to be a true representa-

¹ Witness the monthly journal of the "Wesley Bible Union," issued in the name of Wesleyan Methodism.

tion of the actual sufferings of the "damned," and expressed itself in popular hymns. Charles Wesley only uttered the accepted literal belief, when he sang :

"I want an even strong desire,
I want a calmly fervent zeal;
To save poor souls out of the fire,
To snatch them from the verge of hell;
And turn them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesu's blood."

(ii) Into one or other of these two conditions, horrible, externally inflicted, physical torture; or transcendent physical enjoyment; all who passed out of this life were believed to enter. With the definite understanding that after the event of death, no change either for better or worse was ever possible. The fate of the wicked was declared to be as irrevocable as the bliss of the righteous. Death settled everything, finally and irrevocably, for evermore.

(iii) The horror of the dark side of this representation was intensified beyond all expression or realization, by emphasizing the conception of endlessness. If in any sense a human being was "lost," he was lost for ever and for ever. The hymns of the Methodist revival put all this into unmistakable language.

"Thou God of glorious majesty,
To Thee, against myself, to Thee,
A worm of earth, I cry;
A half-awakened child of man,
An heir of endless bliss or pain,
A sinner born to die!

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand
Secure, insensible;
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.

Whence we came, and whither wending,
 Soon we must through darkness go,
 To inherit bliss unending,
 Or eternity of woe."

Such awful suggestions of everlasting, irremediable, and unrelievable suffering, were not only definitely preached and sung, but constantly insisted on as an absolutely essential part of Christian theology. Many Christian teachers who revolted against it were denounced as heretics, and compelled to resign their positions in the Church.

(iv) It is therefore small wonder that a depressing conviction of the comparative insignificance of this life and all its concerns, became common. The prime motive for Christian faith was said to be "a desire to flee from the wrath to come"; and the Christian ideal was to get through this "waste and howling wilderness" anyhow, so as to reach the "many mansions" of heaven. Multitudes not only fervently sang, but heartily believed that

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
 But how I may escape the death,
 That never, never dies.
 How make my own election sure,
 And when I fail on earth, secure
 A mansion in the skies."

Surely, though slowly, these weird and pitiful perversions of Christianity are dying out. In some quarters, however, they are yet proclaimed, with all the tenacity of fanaticism. But by no Christian teacher of any standing, nor any Christian Church of influence, are such things now preached, or sung, or printed, as of yore. With the exception of Romanism which still maintains, though in modified form, its physical conception of Purgatory and Hell, Christian Churches, even those which claim to be "orthodox," have come to think much more carefully, reverently, charitably, and hopefully, about the unmeasured possi-

bilities of the life to come. It has become manifest, that the old notion of absolute moral and spiritual fixation after death, is an entire fallacy. There is really no warrant for it in the few picked passages which former theories of inspiration invested with a false authority. It must be assumed that the human body is disintegrated after death. So that if there be any truth at all in human survival, that which survives must be the spirit, the self, the personality. How this personality is "clothed upon" by an ethereal body, we cannot tell. But we do know that a fixed personality is a contradiction in terms—unthinkable. We know also that human death is nothing to God. Rather, as Sir Oliver Lodge has recently said :

"In the long run, in the ultimate outlook, in the eye of the Creator, the possibilities of existence, the possibilities open to us, are beyond imagination. The universe is one, a universe of boundless possibilities. The more you penetrate into the secrets of nature, the more overwhelmed you are with wonder, love, and praise."

It is at least certain that if on this side the grave "God is love," so is He also on the other. We know, moreover, that death is a merely physical event, which has in itself no more effect upon moral character, than a tunnel has upon the train that passes through it. So that the character which every moral being here makes for himself, he takes with him, when death transfers him from the visible realm to the invisible. It is that character, and that alone, which decides for him what follows. Here and now, on every hand, human character is making heaven or hell. So, hereafter, when earth's hindrances to good, or restraints upon evil, are removed, heaven and hell will be only more real than our present faculties can apprehend.

But the conception of endlessness, literal eternity, is beyond any mortal man. Nor is it in the least necessary that any true Christian believer should in thought attempt the impossible. It is ours to do for ourselves, for each

other, for all men, whatever is possible, to create a heaven, and prevent hell, here and now. When the night of death closes our earthly opportunity, its results, its rewards, its failures, and eternal possibilities must be left to the "goodness and severity" of Him Whom Jesus reveals as the Heavenly Father, whose "tender mercies are over all His works"—and much more over all His children. Such convictions, which happily are silently but irresistibly moulding modern Christian thought, drive away the dark shadow of depression which the former perversion flung over our present life. They also put an end to the morbid "otherworldliness" which was at one time urged against Christianity. Jesus said little about a heaven or hell to come hereafter, but spent Himself in every way in showing how real they both may be, here and now. In that reality we have the sure and sufficient pledge of boundless possibilities in the life which is to follow after death.

6. MYSTICAL

To speak of Mysticism as a perversion of Christianity, without any qualification or discrimination, would be manifestly a misrepresentation. Amongst those who in times past have been known as mystics, may be found some of the most beautiful characters, who did indeed desire above all to be true to the Christ of the New Testament. From the long ago memories of St. Theresa, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas à Kempis, Brother Lawrence, Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvaux, float down to us with devotional fragrance which is above criticism. In later times we cannot forget the early Anabaptists, Familists, Jacob Boehme, on the Continent; whilst for this country, it is enough to mention George Fox, George Barclay, William Law, amongst the Quakers, with George Herbert and John Keble, Hilton and Julian of Norwich, and others in

the Anglican Church, and, in some of their moods, Methodists like John Nelson, John Haime, Billie Bray. Without endorsing all the deep emotions and high-flown sentiments of such rhapsodists, they were undoubtedly, in a very real sense, true Christian saints. Their experiences were multiform, but generally represented in Charles Wesley's hymn :

“ From the world of sin and noise,
And hurry I withdraw ;
For the small and inward voice
I wait with humble awe ;
Silent am I now and still,
Dare not in Thy presence move ;
To my waiting soul reveal
The secret of Thy love.”

The most attractive and, for ordinary folk, instructive work upon Mysticism in these days, is undoubtedly that of the late Mrs. Herman, entitled *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*. She writes of a “ truly Christian mysticism ” :

“ Whose passion for intimacy with God is checked by the Christian sense of sin, based upon a deeply ethical conception of salvation, and sanctity, and born of a vision of God as He is in Christ Jesus. Sudden contact with grim realities may, and very likely will, make men even less tolerant of ecclesiastical and theological conventions than they were before. But it will likewise make them more suspicious of the preciousness, mock esotericism, and cheap transcendentalism, of fashionable heterodox cults, and far more open to the appeal of an experience of immediacy founded upon the realities of the Christian Gospel.”

That may be. And yet, when all the truth and goodness thus suggested are acknowledged to the uttermost, it must be plainly declared that this ideal does not represent Christianity, but only some phases of it. These, however true and potent, can in themselves no more claim to be the whole Gospel, than emotion can be regarded as the whole of ordinary human life.

The history of the rise and development of mysticism is far too complex to be compressed into a few words. Only volumes can do justice to both sides of the story. But even when we try to keep all in view, making the very most of the best, and the least of the worst, it is none the less true that, judged by the standard of the New Testament, the mysticism which was the real root of the multiplication of monasteries and convents, was a perversion of Christianity. When all the literary labours of some monasteries are appraised at their highest, and all allowance is made for the environment of the dark ages, it must still be affirmed that the whole monastic ideal involves a misunderstanding of God, and a misrepresentation of Christ's intention. Myriads of Christians have thrilled to the words of Bernard of Clairvaux, in his well-known hymn :

" Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast";

but Dr. Workman has only too truly pointed out ¹ that—
" For the world's hopeless sin and misery Bernard has but one cure—better monasteries and more of them." So that the whole case for monastic mysticism is, by the same author, thus fairly estimated : " In Bernard, monasticism had given to the world of its best—and on the whole it had failed." It had doubly failed. Within its own limits there was—" that terrible weariness of self, and of all things, which haunts the cloister." Whilst what Mr. T. H. Darlow says concerning the Benedictines, applies equally to all the other orders :

" For the medieval Benedictines made this supreme mistake; they shut their eyes to the fact that to imitate Christ most directly, His disciples must needs move and mix daily among the unsaved in the common business of life. There is no hint of any cloistered Christianity in the New Testament."

¹ *The Church of the West in the Middle Ages*, p. 287.

The ecclesiastical notions which permitted and promoted such ideals, are now happily out of date—except to a limited extent in the Romish Church. The very names of Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan, monks, are to modern ears but curious and insignificant, if not repellent, relics of the past which no one save a zealous Papist or “Anglo-Catholic” wishes to revive. The “retreats” which are sometimes advocated for “clergy and ministers,” are but transient phases of mysticism. Whether they really become stimulants to true Christian devotion, or mere anodynes of pious subjectivity, depends partly upon the way in which they are conducted, but mostly upon the idiosyncrasies of individual temperament. Thus Sir Henry Lunn writes concerning himself :

“ I felt that I needed to go into dry dock. In sheer helplessness I took a step—and I sought in frequent use of Holy Communion, and in days of self-discipline, the guidance and help that is never denied.”

The result was the issue of a book of 200 pages of printed devotions. To some types of mind these may be really helpful. But certainly the principle of Paul’s great decision in Rom. xiv. must apply here also. To very many besides myself, all such meticulous representations are not only artificial and unhelpful, but definitely repellent. I cannot think of God, as Jesus reveals Him, on these lines. No thoughtful mind will question the wisdom of many utterances in the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis. But some things therein must be accounted perversions much rather than representations of Christ’s Gospel. Thus :

“ Much harder will it be to hear that last word—Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

“ For they who now willingly follow the word of the Cross, shall not then hear the sentence of everlasting damnation.

“ This sign of the Cross shall be in the heaven when the Lord shall come to judgement.”

All that is here implied is misrepresentation, not Christian truth according to the honest and valid interpretation of the New Testament.

For many sincere Christian believers in these days, no small justification of mysticism, in all its forms, is found in that word of Christ which is reported by Luke (xvii. 21), and has been so over-emphasized by Tolstoi. But the stress thus laid upon—"The kingdom of God is within you"—is not warranted, in spite of its being so continually quoted as conclusive. For (a) Jesus did not say this; and (b) in sober truth that which is suggested by such words is impossible.

As to (a), it is open to individual students to maintain the customary rendering of *ἐντὸς ὑμῶν* in this passage. But it may now be truly said that the latest and best scholarship is against it. As witness both Dr. Moffatt's rendering, and the discussion in the International Critical Commentary by Dr. Plummer. Certainly, also, the whole context makes plain that Jesus was then thinking not of an individual internal heaven, but of that Kingdom of Heaven on earth which can only come into existence in a Christian community.

Then as regards (b). A little reflection shows that this kind of religious solipsism was neither the intention of Jesus, nor is the true basis of Christianity. With unmistakable definiteness Jesus declared that there were two great commands, of equal value, in the heavenly realm which He came to establish on earth. The first of these—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart"—may, and indeed must, be kept within each individual soul. But the second—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—cannot possibly be restricted to the inner or mystic life. Of these two commands we are compelled, according to Christ's whole teaching, to affirm that he who does not keep them both, keeps neither. If

intense and persistent meditation upon all that the first great command suggests, issued in a real and thorough-going devotion to the fulfilment of the second, such mysticism would be not the perversion but a realization of Christianity. But does it? Has it done so? Let a capable and impartial scholar answer. Dr. Workman writes concerning the most prevalent form of mysticism:

“By its very constitution, monasticism could not hope to accomplish much for those who refused or were unable to come within its charmed circle. For the few there was the fold; the many who were without, it left to the ravening wolf. The toilers in the squalid courts of the growing cities—those dreadful masses, crawling, sweltering, in the foul hovels of many a Southern town, with never a roof to cover them; huddling in groups under a dry arch alive with vermin; lepers by the hundreds too shocking for mothers to gaze at, and therefore driven forth to curse and howl in the lazar house outside the walls—these it left to work out a hopeless salvation.”¹

The real and dangerous perversion of Christianity to which mysticism is at least most liable, may, in brief summary, be stated as twofold. It tends to, and involves, both extravagant egoism, and theistic distortion. The egoism itself is double. For there is not only a selfish ignoring of all that the second great command connotes, but a morbidly meticulous subjectivity which is quite contrary to the natural, healthy, happy consciousness of communion with God, such as Jesus Himself exemplified and taught. From this, the distortion of the character of God, as Jesus reveals Him, seems to be inseparable. He never did, nor can, desire those mental flagellations to which countless numbers of saints have subjected themselves, in order to please Him. Holiness has thus become terribly marred by the notion of miserable self-condemnation, and humility has been travestied into self-contempt. Dr. Rufus Jones relates how

¹ *The Church of the West in the Middle Ages*, p. 305.

"George Whitehead, one of the pillar Quakers of the seventeenth century, tells how he saw a young woman who had drifted into a Quaker meeting so moved by the power of the silence, that she could stand it no longer, but going outside put her face in her hands and cried out—'O God, make me clean! O God, make me clean!'"¹

But in plain truth, as Jesus taught purity, wherein was such an ordinary "young woman" unclean? Certainly in nothing that He would have condemned. Such imaginary evil can only spring from a distortion of Christ's representation of God. No father on earth would be severely angry, or piqued, or think of inflicting punishment, for the little faults of a loving child. How much less can there be, on the face of the true and tender Fatherhood which Jesus insists is the truth concerning God, any approach to a scowl over the minor imperfections of His children who desire to love and serve Him? Moreover, in the Gospel of Jesus there is nothing approaching the self-contempt which mysticism so often inculcates. He never addressed those about Him as "dust and ashes," "poor nothings," "worthless worms," and the like, which Christian congregations are still taught to sing about themselves. Very far indeed were His disciples from mystical cleanness when Jesus assured them—"The Father Himself loves you." It is this pitifully false, misery-making distortion of the character of God, which has alienated humanity from Christian faith, even to this hour. It is this which has played into the hands of a hierarchy that for its own ends has insisted upon such unwarranted self-despising, and so perverted the intention of Jesus from the beginning. Well might the little one say, as reported, "Mother, I love Jesus, but I hate God." Mrs. Herman, indeed, in her excellent book, says :

"The pearl of great price that is hid for us in the field of mysticism is simple devotion, and humble, loving intimacy with Jesus, as the

¹ *Concerning Prayer*, p. 127.

secret of the mystic knowledge of God, and the mystic communion with God."

But the "mystic knowledge" greatly needs to be made as simple, and homely, and natural, and unselfish, as Jesus made it. For by His revelation our whole "knowledge of God" stands or falls.

7. ASCETIC

Elaborate descriptions of the miserable ascetic perversions which have, alas, prevailed in the Christian Church, from the time of Simeon Stylites down to the wire shirts, with points turned inwards, which are said to be still on sale in Paternoster Row, would be as profitless as harrowing. Dr. Workman tells us concerning Simeon Stylites, that

"Emperors crouched at the foot of his pillar while he performed his devotions, touching his feet with his forehead 1244 times in succession. He died mourned by the whole East as the greatest of the human race. He lived for thirty years on a lofty column, and died without the sin of descending.

"Feebler successors of Simeon buried themselves in the darkest caves. They aspired to reduce themselves to the level of the beast; of some the naked body was only covered by their long hair."¹

One almost despairs of a human nature capable of such miserable delusions. To think of such cruel extravagances in the light of the Gospel of Jesus, makes one shudder. But in lesser degree the notion has always prevailed, and was enormously developed by monasticism, that the way to purify the soul was to abuse the body. It would be easy to trace back its origin through Paganism to savagery—but that must be left to other occasions. All one is bound to record here, is that, in all its forms, such maltreatment of the most wonderful and beautiful structure

¹ *The Church of the West in the Middle Ages*, p. 254. But the whole account there given should be carefully read.

known to us on earth¹—well deserving the Apostolic estimate as a “temple of the living God”—always was, is, and will be, a gross as well as grotesque perversion of Christianity.

Even fasting, which under some circumstances may possibly conduce to good, has been immensely overdone. The reference to it in the old version of Mark ix. 29, has been far too often quoted. For in truth Jesus never said it. Dr. Gould’s note in the International Critical Commentary is well warranted—“‘and fasting’ is an evident gloss. It is one of the things that a later asceticism imported into the spiritual teaching of Jesus.” Alas, it is far from being the only case in which the perversity of ecclesiastical tradition has put unmeasured and persistent stress upon a gloss. But the New Testament speaks plainly enough. The ancient Gnosticism which degraded the body drew forth from Paul his strong protest in 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17—“If any man maltreat the temple of God, him will God also treat in the same way.”

No less condemnation attaches to the modern Gnosticism invented by an American “Mrs. Eddy,” under the false name of “Christian Science.” It is sheer Eddyism, and brazenly declares that “the human body is a myth” which merits only contemptuous ignoring! Both these Gnosticisms are, alike, perversions of Christianity. Nor can anything less be said concerning those Romish and “High” Church developments hinted at above. There is no New Testament warrant whatever for such pious folly. Paul’s avowal of some necessary bodily control, in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 27), is balanced by his acknowledgement in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 8) that “the healthy training of the body is in some respects profitable.” Whilst his solicitude for Timothy’s bodily health

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. For impressive detail see my booklet, *The Mystery of Painlessness* (Epworth Press).

(1 Tim. v. 23) shows how unmistakable was his condemnation of the fanaticism of ascetics. As also in his Colossian letter :

“ If you died with Christ from the maxims of the world, why, as if you were still living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances such as—Do not handle this ; do not taste that ; do not touch this ? All these injunctions refer to perishable things, in obedience to merely human precepts and ordinances. Such notions have indeed an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humiliation, and severity to the body ; but are not of any value against the indulgence of your lower natures.”

8. PURITAN

That Puritanism also shared the ascetic perversion, is only too easy to demonstrate, in spite of the many noble features of character which its devotees undoubtedly displayed. Their faith in general, and their mysticism in particular, were largely based upon the Old Testament, and in not a few respects marred by the Calvinistic theology which gripped that age. Thus the thought of God was distorted, and from that distortion naturally followed consequences which may be summarized in two phrases—bodily severity and mental narrowness. No better summary of the characteristics of the Puritan age can be found, than that of Mr. J. R. Green, in his well-known *Short History of the English People*. The names of Cromwell, Pym, Hampden, Hutchinson, Milton, Bunyan, are writ large for ever on the pages of English history. As a whole, it was undoubtedly true, as Mr. Green says, that—“ The temper of the Puritan gentleman was just, noble, and self-controlled.” It would be easy to enlarge upon the moral excellence of some features of the Puritan character. Yet the same careful writer has to add that—

“ Humour, the faculty which above all corrects exaggeration and extravagance, died away before the new stress and strain of existence. The absolute devotion of the Puritan to a Supreme

Will, tended more and more to rob him of all sense of measure and proportion in common matters. Little things became great things in the glare of religious zeal; and the godly man learnt to shrink from a surplice, or a mince-pie at Christmas, as he shrank from impurity or a lie. Life became hard, rigid, colourless, as it became intense.”¹

What those good and able men, who knew their Bible so well, did with the unmistakable tenderness of Christ’s revelation of the Fatherhood, or with the vast breadth of the Apostolic utterance in Phil. iv. 8, passes comprehension. The nearest approach to an explanation is their unquestioning acceptance of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, as embodied in the Version of 1611. That translation, though it never was legally “authorized,” yet had then become such a tremendous force, from its combined novelty, ecclesiastical adoption, and literary charm, that, as Mr. Green truly writes—“England became the ‘people of one Book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman.” Every word of it was held to be of equally divine authority. So that the Old Testament was as binding upon Christians as the New, and passages could be picked out anywhere and applied to anything. Calvinistic theology, which in that day everywhere prevailed, also put its impress upon the new translation, so that it became the bulwark of all those conceptions of God which culminated in “predestination” and the “decrees.” These made human life to be the same as under Islam—which really means “submission”—an abject submission to a despotic severity; with the prospect of eternal punishment, unless “salvation” were accomplished in the Puritan way. The effect of this atmosphere upon Bunyan is best expressed in his own words:

“When I was but a child of nine or ten years, these things did so distress my soul that then, in the midst of my merry sports and

¹ *Short History of English People*, pp. 459, 453.

childish vanities amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind—yet I could not let go my sins. But one day, as I was in the midst of a game of cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul which said—‘ Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell ? ’ Wherefore leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven and it was as if with the eyes of my understanding I had seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if He did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for those, and other such, ungodly practices.”

“ Such was Puritanism.” Even Milton’s brighter, gentler spirit, as shown in *Comus* and *L’Allegro*, and his avowed “ love of moral beauty,” yet manifested the “ sterner tones of the Puritan temper ” which “ narrowed human sympathy and human intelligence.” Bunyan’s fascinating allegory has probably been read more than any other book in the world except the Bible. But in spite of its measureless popularity throughout Christendom, and its many vivid and truthful lessons, it is in some important respects much rather a perversion than a representation of Christ’s Gospel. All the wit and wisdom of the fascinating story does not avail to conceal its fundamental assumptions, or justify its main ideal. The average human being is depicted as the inhabitant of a city doomed to destruction ; which is certainly a false view of this world or of the whole of human life. He is also represented as staggering under a load of sin, to an extent which is far from being a just picture of the majority of men and women, and could only be derived from a false theology. Furthermore, the whole conception of what Christianity terms “ salvation,” is made to consist in “ saving one’s own soul.” In the story, Christian leaves his wife and children to shift for themselves, in spite of the danger from which he himself runs away. To which the remark in the report of the recent

Copec Conference¹ may well and truly apply—"When we are concerned primarily about our own souls, we become self-centred, introspective, valetudinarian, precisely as when we are primarily concerned with our own bodily life." Speaking generally, but quite unequivocally, human life would be a poor, hard, narrow thing, if all its capacities and activities were limited to the ideals extolled in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The outlook of the Apostle Paul, and indeed of all the New Testament, is as much brighter and broader than Puritanism, as the glow of a summer's day is than the chill of a November fog. Even when the fullest appreciation is accorded to the many wise and worthy suggestions of "the immortal allegory," it certainly does not truly represent that Kingdom of Heaven on earth which Jesus came to establish, and for which Christianity must stand so long as it deserves the name. As pointed out above, the keeping of the first great Command does not fulfil the whole intention of Jesus. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is absolutely ignored by Bunyan's parable, is an unmistakable and inescapable half of Christ's message to humanity. In the words of the Copec Report—following the sentence quoted above :

"We gain our own souls, truly, only by forgetting ourselves, and by living and working for a better world here, and for the faith, hope, and love, to be realised through it."

Individual salvation may indeed be the first step in the redemption of the world ; but Christianity, to be true to its Founder, is bound to keep His second command in view, quite as much as the first. Real Christianity cannot but embody and enforce all the sweetness and light, the breadth and sympathy, the constant and boundless altruism, which are certainly included in the great saying of Jesus which the Apostle quoted to the Ephesian

¹ Vol. i. p. 22.

believers. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

9. ECCENTRIC

It has been said, only too truly,¹ that—"As in the ancient world which in so large a measure resembles our own day, there are still false Christs, and false prophets in abundance, and the people are drawn after them." The unprecedented spread of education, and the unmeasured development of personal liberty, have combined with the marvellous discoveries of science and diffusion of literature, to make the average man or woman think, both on religious and social matters, as never before. The results are manifest in general religious unrest, and social discontent. In each case, action has provoked reaction, and obscurantism has followed hard upon progressive growth. So that in the religious realm which we here consider, besides the general attitudes which we have been compelled to regard as perversions of real Christianity, there have come into existence numerous separate sections of avowed Christian believers, each strongly maintaining its own doctrine and discipline, which cannot but be included in the same category. Modern Christendom has thus become a vivid illustration of the warning to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4):

"The time will come when men will not tolerate wholesome teaching, but having ears that must be tickled, they will gather heaps of teachers to suit their own fancies. Thus they will pay no regard to the truth, but will be turned out of the way to myths."

How many of these sects there are really, all of them more or less intelligent and sincere, no one can say. It is not necessary here to give a complete list, or a doctrinal synopsis of the tenets of even the best known of them.

¹ *Copec Commission Report*, vol. i. p. 3.

Some indeed are as little known as the "Disciples of Christ," and may be left unnoticed amidst the "350 religions" of which popular exaggeration speaks. Whilst others are fairly prominent and include thousands of adherents, knit together in definite organizations. They all alike claim to represent Christianity in belief and behaviour, before the modern world. The following seven may be regarded as the most noticeable and influential. Plymouth Brethren, Christadelphians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Russellites, Mormons, Eddyists (miscalled Christian Scientists), and British Israelites. Details concerning these may be found elsewhere. The reasons why they are here summarily characterized as perversions of Christianity may be expressed as briefly as carefully.

(i) *Plymouth Brethrenism*

This sect dates from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Messrs. Cronin, Groves, and Darby. It was afterwards promulgated by Messrs. Kelly, Stoney, and Raven. It is now somewhat divided, but is still in some districts a living force. Their religious attitude may perhaps be pronounced rather eccentric than perverse. They lay great stress upon the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, as "the Word of God"; especially upon the literal truth of the earlier chapters of Genesis. They insist upon the frequent "breaking of bread," and look for a visible second coming of Christ. But they have no clerical system, or separated ministry, though they form a very close community. Their distinctive features seem to be the sincere rigidity of their obscurantist theology, the assumption of definite superiority to all other Churches, and the infallibility of their own special views.

(ii) *Christadelphianism*

This sect also arose during the first half of the nineteenth century. The movement began with a Dr. Thomas, who went to America to propagate his special beliefs. But in later times the chief "ecclesia" has been at Birmingham, under the leadership of Mr. R. Roberts. They broke from the orthodoxy of their time, by denying the doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the immortality of the human soul, and the current doctrine of the Atonement. They too lay great stress upon the weekly "breaking of bread," and form a very closely disciplined community in each place, without regard to any other. They also strongly maintain the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and insist upon the literal acceptance of the opening chapters of Genesis. Two other special features of this cult are their intense opposition to any form or degree of priesthood or clericalism, and their fluent readiness to quote Scripture indiscriminately on behalf of their tenets. Their knowledge of the "Authorized" Version of the English Bible is, as a rule, remarkable.

(iii) *Seventh-Day Adventism*

This sect also began in America, in the opening years of the nineteenth century. At first, under the leadership of William Miller, who was a small farmer and uneducated, but from diligent study of the Bible became a Christian and set himself to predict the second coming of Christ in 1844, from the Book of Daniel. But the real prophetess of this cult was Mrs. White, whose standard work, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*, is still the authoritative account of their tenets. Mrs. White had a vision in which the Fourth Commandment was marvellously emphasized, and from that time the Seventh-Day Sabbath

was declared to be for ever binding upon Christians, whilst the Pope was charged with having changed the day of rest to Sunday. In some respects they resemble the Christadelphians, denying the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of the Trinity, the usual view of the Atonement, and eternal punishment. They also insist upon the unconsciousness of the human soul after death, until a future resurrection of the body for the Last Judgement, after which, sinners will be annihilated. A few years ago this sect had a large following, mostly in America. There were some 1100 church buildings, 55 educational institutions, and 64 sanatoriums. They also issued 96 regular periodicals in 19 languages, and other literature in 50; so that their influence was by no means small. Their fluent and stubborn tenacity in quoting from the Bible, in support of their doctrines, is as marked as with the two other cults just mentioned.

(iv) *Russellism*

This is the true name for the sect which publishes innumerable plausible booklets and papers, under the name of "Millennial Dawn," or the "International Bible Study Association." The best known of these issues are the *Bible Students' Monthly*, the *People's Pulpit*, the *Watch Tower*, and *Herald of Christ's Presence*. But their doctrinal system is set forth in seven good-sized volumes: (1) *The Divine Plan of the Ages*; (2) *The Time is at Hand*; (3) *Thy Kingdom Come*; (4) *The Day of Vengeance*; (5) *The Atonement between God and Man*; (6) *The New Creation*; (7) *The Finished Mystery*. The whole series comprises some 3500 pages, and is sold at very low price. This sect also comes from America, having originated in the teachings of "Pastor Russell," who has been called, with good reason, the cleverest propagandist of the age. He died a few years since. It is difficult to show in a few

words why this widespread and strongly held system deserves to be called a perversion.¹ There are some good points about it which cannot honestly be ignored. But like the preceding, it regards the whole Bible as literally God's word, and claims to be its only true interpreter. Its theology is distinctly Unitarian, whilst the opening chapters of Genesis are accepted as the literally true and scientific account of the origin of the human race. Adam and Eve were absolutely perfect until they fell, and that fall meant the absolute extinction at death of all their descendants. In an elaborate chart it is shown that the year 1872 was exactly 6000 years from the creation of Adam and Eve; in 1874 the second coming of Christ took place, invisibly but really; and the millennial processes of salvation are going on until 2914, when the whole world will be restored to the full divine favour in which Adam basked in the garden of Eden. The further careful scrutiny of this system will fully justify the term "perversion," as applied to it; whilst its accumulated wealth and widespread influence, together with the fanatic tenacity with which it is held and pertinacity with which it is propagated, should suffice to move ordinary thoughtful Christians to regard it with something more than mere careless dismissal. Lectures free to all, and without collections, are continually delivered in all the large cities in this country, and popular attraction created by reiterated stress upon a booklet by Judge Rutherford—who is the principal protagonist of the movement—entitled, *Millions now Living will Never Die*.

At the root of all these cults lies the same estimate and treatment of the Bible. As long as such conceptions of inspiration are maintained, it is quite useless to discuss religion with any members of them. The whole case may

¹ I have done so in the booklet entitled, *Why not Russellism?* published by the Epworth Press.

as charitably as truly, be summarized in Paul's reference to similar devotees in his time—"I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." ¹

(v) *Mormonism*

To refer to Mormonism as a perversion of Christianity is paying it too great a compliment. The only reason, indeed, for mention of this colossal instance of modern religious fanaticism, is to add yet another protest against its blasphemous falsity and deadly dangers. It was founded upon deliberate fraud and demonstrated delusion; its references to the Bible are as false as audacious; its doctrines are revolting; and its political developments constitute a menace to any modern government, as the U.S.A. found to their cost. Yet, thanks to its seductive appeal to human passions, and the abnormal cleverness with which its organization was developed and is perpetuated, its fanatic propagandism is still going on (1926). The plausible persistence of its "missionaries" is immeasurable; and has led literally thousands of young girls into shame and misery. The history of Mormonism reeks with blood and tears and depravity, which all the later hygienic and social developments of Utah, and the wonderful buildings of Salt Lake City, will never wipe out. The avowal now made that polygamy is given up, is radically as well as actually false; for polygamy is definitely and ineradicably part of the Mormon creed. The apparent change is no indication of repentance, but merely external and unwilling yielding to the pressure brought to bear upon Utah by the U.S.A. government. The late head of their "Church," who died in 1918, left five wives and forty-three children. Whilst the present President, Heber J. Grant, has three wives and twelve children.

¹ Rom. x. 2.

Whether all this has any kinship with Christianity, any child can tell. The truest reference to them in the New Testament is in the second letter to Timothy, and that of Jude.

“ For of these are they that creep into houses and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“ For there are certain men crept in privily—ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.” ¹

Yet such is the plausibility and persistence of Mormon advocates, that it is authoritatively shown that in the eight months which preceded the last great war, not less than 1200 young women were sent to Utah, from Lancashire and Yorkshire alone. Rev. Sir E. Browne Cave, a well-known London clergyman, states that during his residence in Salt Lake City, 1600 young girls were landed there; whilst of 20,000 girls known to have migrated there during the past ten years, not one had ever returned. It is said, indeed, that since the war, Mormonism has made great progress in Germany, and that they have buildings with public services and crowded congregations, in Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, and other large centres. The propagandism in this country is always going on as persistently as insidiously. Its real history, which ought to be studied, may be found in the following works: *The Story of the Mormons*, by W. A. Linn (Macmillan); *The Mystery of Mormonism*, by Stuart Martin (Oldhams); article in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (T. & T. Clark); *Why not Mormonism?* by F. Ballard (Epworth Press). These will more than suffice. That such a cult, with such a history, should in these days still continue to make converts, is but another sad proof of the possibilities of religious fanaticism.

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 6; Jude 4.

(vi) *Eddyism*

The name by which this cult claims to be known is "Christian Science." But as it is emphatically neither Christian nor scientific, and has for its Alpha and Omega an American woman, Mrs. Eddy—its only true title is as above. During the last fifty years Eddyism has grown with even more than the usual fanatic rapidity. It is remarkable and significant how many of these modern perversions of Christianity have their origin and centre in a woman. Ann Lee started the Shakers; Mrs. White the Seventh-Day Adventists; Joanna Southcote the Southcottians; Mrs. Eddy the Eddyists; Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant between them have promulgated Theosophy. The true story of the life and work of Mrs. Eddy is given in the volume by Georgine Milmine—the revelations of which are so convincing, that it was found necessary, by Mrs. Eddy's devotees, to issue a special laudatory account by "Sibyl Wilbur." No one can dispute the fact that Mrs. Eddy left behind her more than £550,000, derived mainly from the sale of her book, entitled *Science and Health and a Key to the Scriptures*. This volume remains, after hundreds of editions, the real Bible of this cult. To this weird production her followers are even more closely bound, than the Moslem to his Koran, or the Fundamentalist to the "Authorized" Version of the Bible.

It is far from being enough to speak of this movement as a perversion of Christianity, for it is in many respects a downright contradiction of the New Testament. Six definite statements concerning its doctrines and influence admit of complete proof. When its tenets are taken from the book above specified—which is emphatically declared to be its only standard—this system, which is truly and utterly, sheer Eddyism, involves the following: (1) It

is certainly not Christian, for the reason above alleged ; (2) it is utterly contrary to science, as that term is understood in its universal employment ; (3) its philosophy is as puerile as false ; (4) it ruthlessly tramples upon that common sense which is the hall-mark of sanity ; (5) it leads individuals into delusions which often increase and intensify suffering ; (6) it constitutes an intolerable menace to the well-being of human society. In point of fact, it is absolutely impracticable ; and there is not one single consistent Eddyist living.

As regards the elements of truth which are to be found in its principles, they are but as the few grains of radium which may be found in a ton of pitch-blende. And it is enough to say concerning them, that in order to warm one's hands, no sane man will set his house on fire. The two pleas which are persistently urged on its behalf, refer to healing and character. As to the latter, it is simply untrue to profess that Eddyism produces more really saintly characters than do ordinary Christian Churches. Genuine saints, in all the Churches, do not exhibit themselves for inspection in public. But at the very least, they exist as surely, and in as great a proportion, as in any Eddyistic community.

Whilst as to the boasted cures, it is indeed necessary to say *audi alteram partem*. For many of them are quite unreal, seeing that the assumed disease never actually preceded ; a reliable diagnosis not having been made at the outset. Many alleged cures are only temporary, and the last state of the sufferer is worse than the first. This is not fiction but pitiful fact, as I have shown elsewhere.¹

¹ See *Why not Eddyism ?* (Epworth Press), where also a list of other works, reliable and conclusive, is given. The latest (1926) complete exposure of this mischievous delusion is the volume published by Messrs. Geo. Allen & Unwin, entitled, *The Faith, the Falsity, and the Failure of Christian Science*, by Woodbridge Riley, Ph.D. ;

Those cures which may be truthfully estimated as real, are even more fatally contradictory to Eddyist principles than any other demonstration of its errors. For seeing that it is one of the main principles of this craze that there is no real disease or sin, that which never existed assuredly can never be either healed or altered. So that the dilemma is absolutely inevitable. If the cure is real, then the disease must have been real, and the main dictum of Eddyism is false. If, on the other hand, the disease was an illusion, then certainly there was no cure of it. If really there is no such thing as disease, or sin, the ceaseless boasting about healing disease, and reforming sinners, is so much mere rhodomontade.

If further proof were needed of the main delusions of this cult, it is found in the fact that myriads of other remarkable cures occur, more than equal to anything alleged by Eddyism, without any more reference to its asseverations than to ordinary therapeutics. There is no question as to the reality of many cases of inexplicable healing in connection with the happenings at Lourdes; or through Couéism; or Spiritualism; or indeed patent medicines. So that any claim to have discovered in Eddyism the true and only secret of healing—as Mrs. Eddy strongly affirms in her book—is definitely shown, by plain facts, to be false.

When it is asked, then how is it that this cult still finds sincere and intelligent devotees in the face of modern knowledge, the answers are not far to seek. First, there is the tragic amount of human suffering with the natural longing for its relief. Then there was undoubtedly at the outset the clever and tireless energy, coupled with unbounded ambition, of one woman; together with the

Frederick W. Peabody, LL.B.; C. E. Humiston, M.D., Sc.D. Those who think my strictures too severe, will find more than sufficient justification of them in these convincing pages.

strange but measureless forces which in so many situations lead human beings to follow a leader. The opportunities for making money were demonstrated in the fortune she left behind. Whilst since her death, a most astute band of organizers has developed the opportunities in other ways besides the sale of the book. The latest price of this volume is seventeen shillings, and every member is expected to purchase a copy. It is thus pre-eminently a cult of wealth and women. In the vast list of "practitioners," there are nine women to one man.

The propagandism of this cult in England is maintained by a band of lecturers from Boston, U.S.A., who traverse the country, holding meetings free of all charge, in the largest halls or theatres they can obtain, in all the great city centres—where no questions or discussions are permitted. Also by a special system of watching in the daily press. This is at present in the hands of a Mr. Tennant, from whom a letter of plausible reply will immediately appear, if any public reference is made in any journal or newspaper, concerning Eddyistic fallacies.

One fact, however, remains, plain and sure, beyond all controversy. The public health of this country is now happily far better than it has ever been before. So that the child born to-day, has the clear prospect, under normal circumstances, of twelve years longer life than his grandfather could have expected when he arrived. That these facts, together with the wonderful diminution of most virulent diseases, give the lie direct to Eddyism, is manifest. For all these beneficent improvements, with still more in view, are *due to doing exactly the contrary* to all that Eddyism asserts. To this there is no answer. So that every day, and everywhere, Eddyists are living upon the contradiction of their alleged principles. Meanwhile, all that is worth preserving in the half-truths which Mrs. Eddy—by her own confession at first—borrowed from Mr. Quimby,

and afterwards distorted to suit her own purpose—will be increasingly found in the new psychology of to-day, including especially the modern psychotherapy which, under various names, is winning universal recognition.

(vii) *British Israelism*

Another curious instance of religious fanaticism, and the perversion not so much of Christianity as of Bible teaching in general, is found in the craze which is known as the British-Israel theory. Like Russellism, it makes much ado about "the secrets of God revealed in the great Pyramid," and lays vast stress upon the Book of Daniel, accepted on traditional lines. After the manner of other perversions, it has poured forth floods of literature of all kinds. Its main contention is that the inhabitants of Great Britain really are "the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel," whilst the dwellers in America are the tribe of Manasseh. The most popular expositions of this notion, about half a century ago, were those of E. Hine, entitled *Lost Israel Found—Forty-Seven Identifications*, with "flashes of light." Also *British-Israel Truth*, by Messrs. Hanan & Smith. These obtained wide circulation. Since then, this infatuation has obtained strong hold in many influential quarters. Not a few styled Rt. Honourables, with Dukes and Earls, several bishops and many clergymen, and the usual number of colonels who flock to every new religious craze, have accepted and endorsed it. Largely attended meetings have also been held in the Central Hall, Westminster, under Royal patronage. Thus it has attracted no small notice, and seems to many excellent folk to be alike true and important. Whilst writing this there comes by post, the latest number of *The National Message: The Weekly Official Journal of the British-Israel World Federation*. It contains the names of three royal personages, twenty-

three of the "aristocracy," one archbishop, five bishops, more than eighty clergymen, fifteen generals, twenty-five colonels, together with a hundred others, including many captains and medical men. It is announced that since 1919 "most wonderful progress has been made. Thousands of members have been enrolled, scores of branches established, a publishing Company formed, splendid headquarters secured opposite Buckingham Palace, hundreds of meetings held. A Congress is held each year; two official weekly journals are being issued, parcels of books dispatched every day to many parts of the world, millions of leaflets and pamphlets are broadcast."

In face of all this, it seems quite presumptuous to pronounce this whole notion a perversion; but there are genuine reasons for so doing. Inasmuch as full discussion is here impossible, it may be well to mention one or two publications which should suffice. The first and best of these, is that by Mr. S. H. Wilkinson, the well-known missionary to the Jews. It is entitled *British Israelism Examined: A Point-by-Point Examination*, published in 1923, by the Mildmay Mission to the Jews press. In the foreword the Rev. E. L. Langton sums up the situation thus: "This strange theory, on close and careful investigation, has not one substantial fact to stand upon, whether in the realm of scriptural exposition, or historical facts. From beginning to end, it is pure conjecture, built up on mere coincidence." In support of this view the following issues are also worth notice: *Englishmen not Israelites*, by J. Wilkinson (Parton); *The History of the Lost Ten Tribes*, D. Baron (Morgan & Scott); *Is British Israelism Scriptural Truth?* W. C. Procter (C. Thynne); *British-Israel Theory Criticised*, A. Simmonds (S.P.C.K.); *Remarks upon the British-Israel Theory*, by Clericus (S.P.C.K.). For any one with open mind, these will suffice to justify the term "perversion" as applied to this pious infatuation.

(viii) *Theosophy*

This cult also has a large following, but mostly amongst the wealthy and educated classes. It makes no appeal to and has no attraction for the poor or uneducated. Like the other bizarre cult which calls itself "Christian Science," Theosophy assumes a name to which it has no real right. In spite of all the numbers, wealth, devotion, and lofty claims of its advocates, it is, when closely examined, a mere agglomeration of unjustifiable pretensions. It is not so much a perversion of Christianity as a downright contradiction. *The Times* newspaper put the whole truth into a sentence when it declared that—"The day that we accept Theosophy, we renounce Christ." The glamour of Mrs. Besant's references—when she is in this country—to Theosophy as "esoteric Christianity," is sheer misrepresentation. Its references to Christ Himself are alone sufficient to justify such an estimate beyond all discussion. What I have written elsewhere, in the booklet entitled *Why not Theosophy?*¹ may here be as usefully as truthfully repeated :

"For Theosophy there is in the Christian sense no Jesus Christ at all. The outrageous absurdities, falsities, and self-contradictions of Mrs. Besant in this respect, will be found overwhelmingly displayed in the little book written by the pronounced Theosophist, M. Eugène Levy.

"For the two present leaders of Theosophy—Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater—there is no historical Christ at all. The Gospels are apocryphal. The only Jesus was born 105 B.C. in Palestine, trained in an Essene community, instructed in all secret knowledge of the Mysteries, and thus became at the age of twenty-nine, through a spotless mind and body, a suitable vehicle for the use of the great One, the Christ. Jesus afterwards became a Master, in the person of Apollonius of Tyana; to-day He is one of the Masters on a level with Koot Hoomi, of Blavatsky fame, and is living somewhere in

¹ Epworth Press, p. 293.

the neighbourhood of Lebanon. Those who wish to trace back the past lives of this Master Jesus to the time when in 13,500 B.C. He is the wife [*sic*] of an emperor in South India, will find it and many other such actual revelations in the book entitled *Whence, How, and Where?* published by the joint labours of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater."

To call such pitiful stuff as this a perversion of Christianity is evidently too mild an estimate. It can only be done as a concession to some of the "good points" of Theosophy which were truly Christian, ages before this weird cult was ever heard of. Theosophy is said to inculcate the omnipresence of the Divine; the lofty destiny of the soul; the character-forming potency of thought; the constant perception of spiritual reality; the determination to detect God's spirit acting everywhere. It professes to hear the divine call in the humblest of the prophets, to be charitable to all forms of religion, and to aim at an unrestricted universal brotherhood of men. So far good. But what else? An impartial scrutiny soon shows that this display of goodness is not only far from being Christian, but is of small avail for anything, seeing that—to quote a sympathetic but honest critic—"it is kept stretched on the rack of an impossible philosophy, muffled beneath the most grotesque display of pseudo-erudition, and in danger of complete dissolution in the air of a treacherous sentimentalism."

Whatever estimate be taken of its alleged excellences, it is evident enough that it is in no real sense Christian. (i) Christianity knows nothing of its main principles—Mahatmas, Karma, Reincarnation, Devachan, Avatars, Nirvana. (ii) Its Pantheism has nothing in common with the God whom Jesus revealed. (iii) It entirely dismisses all thought of prayer, repentance, forgiveness, or the Christian idea of salvation. (iv) The Gospels are said to be "little more than a collection of crude blunders by

misguided redactors, who ignorantly imagined them to refer to historical facts." Whilst the whole New Testament is scorned in comparison with the Bhagavad Gita, Mrs. Besant's "priceless treasure." (v) The references of Mrs. Besant, who is the mouthpiece of Theosophy, to the coming of the Christ are not only anti-Christian, but as repulsive as absurd. The coming Christ is said to be "Krishnamurti," *alias* "Alcyone," *alias* Lord Maitreya, an Indian lad about twenty years old, who has "passed through thirty-two reincarnations," and is declared to be far higher and more exalted than the Christ of the Gospels. His training by Mr. Leadbeater was declared in the Madras High Court to be "frankly immoral." (vi) The absurdities of Reincarnation speak for themselves. Thus it is avowed that

"Socrates was reincarnated in Alfred the Great ; David in Jesus ; Elijah in John the Baptist ; Mary Queen of Scots in the Countess of Caithness ; a Hyksos king in Colonel Olcott ; King Seti, father of Rameses the Great, in Mr. F. Thurstan ; Solon the Athenian legislator in a big-headed Californian boy. Dr. Peebles was told that thousands of years ago he was an Aryan Adept, then he was Habbakuk, then Herodotus, then Origen, then Peter the Hermit."

(vii) All the assertions about the Mahatmas are sheer, pitiful, repulsive nonsense. That should suffice. Authoritative quotations would abundantly endorse such an estimate. Further reliable information will be found in the booklet mentioned above. But so prolific and audacious has been the output of Theosophic printing, from Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, to Mrs. Besant's more than fifty publications, and other kindred works, that it may be worth while to note here a few of the reliable and pertinent criticisms which justify what is stated above as to the misleading glamour of this whole craze :

- The Fraud of Theosophy.* J. N. Maskelyne (Routledge).
The Theosophic Heresy. W. L. Holland (Routledge).
Mrs. Besant and the Present Crisis in the Theosophic Society.
 M. Eugène Levy (H. J. Heywood Smith).
Theosophy and the Coming Christ. E. R. McNeile (S.P.G.).
Modern Substitutes for Traditional Christianity. E. McClure
 (S.P.C.K.).
From Theosophy to Christian Faith. E. R. McNeile (Longmans).

Other perversions of Christianity besides those thus briefly considered, might unfortunately be specified. Seeley's terms, "multiform and grotesque," are but too true, and point in many directions. Two other instances must yet be mentioned, as being both widespread and influential. They may be fairly described as Biblical, and Conventional.

10. BIBLICAL

With special reference to the Bible, it is only intended here to point out how the general attitude towards the Bible which is adopted by large numbers of avowed Christians, is really a perversion of Christianity. There is such a thing as Bibliolatry. It consists in affirming dogmatically certain things about the Bible, its inspiration, inerrancy, and authority, which are declared with unmeasured and reiterated emphasis—and not seldom with acrimony—to be the *sine quâ non* of Christianity. The Bible is said to be, without any qualification or limitation, "the Word of God," "the Holy Book," "the Book of books," and the whole of it, without any reserve, is proclaimed to be the basis of Christian faith and binding upon the Christian conscience, as the sole source and final authority in regard to doctrine. In the vast majority of cases, the reference is to the Version of 1611, usually, but without warrant, called the "Authorized" Version. This, in spite of hundreds of undeniable errors, is still read as "lessons" in almost all Anglican Churches, and in the

majority of Free Churches, throughout the country. Even when the superior accuracy of the Revised Version is reluctantly acknowledged, it is not suffered to mitigate the ultramontane sense in which the Bible is declared to be "the Word of God."

By the acceptance of this estimate of the Bible, Christianity is said to stand or fall. Criticism in general, and the "higher criticism" in particular, are denounced in bitterest terms of hatred and contempt. Indeed, the pious virulence of Fundamentalist Societies like the Bible League, the Pentecostal League, and the Wesley Bible Union, leave no room to doubt that if such could have their way, they would no more be content with verbal protests than were the Romish Inquisitors of the sixteenth century. One of the most common practices of such Bibliolaters, which is quite typical of much more, is to quote Rev. xxii. 18, 19, with solemn emphasis as applying to the whole Bible. Whereas a moment's honest attention cannot but show that such words have no reference whatever to the Bible, but only express the stress which the writer of "The Revelation" laid upon his own preceding work.

It is plain that this exaltation of the Bible into a fetish, to be accepted on the lines above indicated, without demur, by all who would be Christians, fully merits the application of the Apostolic protest in Acts xv. 10 :

"Why then do you provoke God by seeking to put a yoke on the neck of these disciples, which neither our fathers nor we could bear?" Such worship of a book—which is really a collection of human writings, whatever else may be true about them—is but a man-made conceit which contributes not a little to that attitude of doubt, if not of downright disbelief, which in these days characterizes so many thoughtful people. It cannot but tend to alienate them from Christianity altogether, and it is assuredly a perversion of what

Jesus meant by His declaration that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

11. CONVENTIONAL

The preceding perversions of real Christianity tend to make more common and easy the greatest perversion of all, namely, that external substitution of the nominal for the real, which may be truly described as conventionalism, or Churchianity. That the striving after reality in Christian faith may lead to fanaticism, must be frankly acknowledged. This is doubtless the explanation of all the eccentric cults, and merits much sympathy. For partly in revolt from the harshness and severity of some theologies, partly by reason of the mental indolence which is included in human heredity, Christianity has too often been reduced to a mere aggregation of religious customs, multiplication of pietistic words, and persistent repetition of rites and ceremonies. Only too truly did Seeley write—"that the fruits of a Christianity so hollow should be poor and sickly is not surprising." Hence one of the commonest sneers of disbelief, that after nearly two thousand years of Christianity the world of humanity is, in some respects, in such a parlous condition. The ever-intensifying horrors of war, with the ghastly inequalities of modern life, and the many abominations of civilization, are alleged as proofs of the futility of Christianity. But every one who is at once intelligent and honest, knows that such an indictment is utterly unwarranted. There has never yet been a Christian nation, or a Christian city; and there seems to be small likelihood of either for many generations to come. It is Churchianity, religious conventionalism, that has failed, and will yet fail.

Thus it comes to pass in this "Christian country" that vast numbers are content to "profess and call themselves

Christians," whose only title to that name is that they are conventionally religious. They go to church, weather permitting, once on a Sunday; so long as the building is comfortable, the music enjoyable, the preacher brief; and contribute something that they do not miss, to the "collection." It would be difficult indeed to say, besides these items, what is the difference between them and openly avowed disbelievers. Again Seeley is right, when he says—"that is wanting for the most part which Christ held to be all in all, spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion." It is not seldom averred that even if most churches are half empty, the people are not irreligious; that there is a "diffused Christianity" which is very potent for good. "Diffused," certainly, such religiousness may be, but Christianity it is not. The difference between such Churchianity and Christ's Christianity is as great and significant as between gold and tinsel; or between the electricity which is diffused in the air, and that which drives our trains and tram-cars. And it is mainly because of that difference, that at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the prayer Christ Himself taught His disciples so long ago—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth"—seems to be as far as ever from being answered in our "advanced" civilization.

It is always true that the Churches contain a far greater number of real "saints," and exercise a wider and deeper influence, than their critics ever acknowledge. None the less the fact remains manifest, that even in the Churches, the really devoted and working members are but a minority, compared with those who are only too truly described above.

I V

APPROXIMATIONS

FAILURE from an ideal does not necessarily involve failure in the effort to reach it. Much may be accomplished, even when all is not attained. In his impressive Bampton Lectures for 1907, Mr. J. H. Peile referred only too truly to "the comparative failure of Christianity as a rule of life and conduct." But he at the same time made plain that this comparative failure has been, and yet is, of more value to humanity than all the combined successes of science, philosophy, art, and literature. If, for the moment, science be taken as the most potent of these influential modern developments, what mankind may expect from it, without those principles upon which Christianity insists, has been shown recently in ominous fashion by Mr. J. S. Haldane in his *Daedalus*. So that we may well turn to those forms of Christian doctrine and practice which may truthfully be termed "approximations" to Christ's teaching rather than "perversions," and seek an honest estimate of their worth. To do them justice many volumes would be required. The following is only a brief though careful summary. But it is based upon many years of close contact and personal knowledge. There are in our British midst, seven of these best-known approximations. The analogous representatives of Christianity in America must be left to residents in that vast realm, who will better know them. In this country—excluding, for reasons above stated, Romanism and "Anglo-Catholicism"—we have

Anglicanism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, Baptists, Friends, and the Salvation Army. What then is the worth of these, as exponents of that Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus avowedly came to set up on earth ?

1. ANGLICANISM

“The Church of England as by law established” not only enjoys the supreme social position amongst religious bodies, but claims the right so to do, on the ground of a history, more or less reliable, which traces back to earliest times its origin and authority. Most of its teachers, technically known as “clergymen,” to distinguish them from Free Church “ministers,” rest their claim to ecclesiastical superiority on the doctrine of episcopal admission to “holy orders.” These, in turn, are said to derive divine authority through an unbroken chain of bishops in an “Apostolical succession,” reaching back even to the first century. Anglicanism is, however, distinctly divided into three schools of thought and practice—the high, low, and broad. The “high” school, now generally known as “Anglo-Catholic,” is strongly opposed by the rest, because of its hankering after Rome, and its scorn for the name and influence of Protestantism. It is from this school that occasional “converts” to Romanism are made, such as Messrs. G. K. Chesterton, John Oxenham, and others. It goes without saying that for such Anglicans, sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism are emphasized as the very essence of Christianity. But in this respect they are strongly opposed by the “low” Church, or “Evangelical” section. These regard the Reformation in Luther’s time as divinely inspired, and glory in the name of Protestant, although their clergy are still called “priests,” in accord with the terminology of the Prayer Book to which they devoutly cling. As a rule, they make no special sacerdotal

claims, and preach what is known as "Evangelical" doctrine. In contrast with them, and even more strenuously opposed to Romish pretensions, the "broad" Church is distinguished by more modern views, not only as to the nature of the Church and the Bible, but in regard to the relations between Christianity and modern knowledge—especially scientific and critical knowledge. Consequently, they are regarded with suspicion and even aversion, almost as much by the "low" as by the "high" Church section of Anglicanism.

It is difficult to say which of these schools of thought wields more influence now, or holds more promise for the future. So far as Christian life and character are concerned, there is little to choose between them. There are undoubtedly many noble men and excellent scholars in each section. They have all developed wonderfully during the last half-century, especially in the larger towns and cities. It is probably impossible to exaggerate the actual and national influence of the Anglican Church as a whole, wielded as it is throughout the country by means of the parochial system. The loftiest positions of the two arch-bishops are well filled at the present time; and although there are great differences of ability and views between the many bishops, on the whole they are certainly a body of sincere and able men. They are, of course, all devoted, as well as pledged, to the episcopal form of Church government, which in some respects is excellent enough, but is also specially liable to the sacerdotal perversions outlined above. The "broad" Church does not suffer from these tendencies, but appeals to the few rather than to the many, and so lacks the influence with ordinary people which is exercised by the other two sections. Its journal, *The Modern Churchman*, is specially well written, and ably edited, but has not a large circulation.

Just now (1927), a controversy is raging as to the revision

of the Prayer Book—whether changes shall be made relating to the principle of the “reservation of the Sacrament,” and other Romish tendencies. In spite of vigorous opposition, and great meetings at the Royal Albert Hall, it seems fairly certain that unmistakable concessions are being made to the dogged persistence of the “high Church” party, with consequent developments in the direction of Romish perversions. There can be no question as to the devotion of the majority of the Anglican clergy, nor any doubt that many of them preach a real Gospel. But their slavish attachment to the Prayer Book is a very serious hindrance to their modern Christian influence. For whatever the sacred associations and excellences of that compilation, not only do its constantly reiterated words become mechanical and meaningless, but its archaic speech, its Calvinistic doctrinal tinge, together with its many anachronisms, make it increasingly unsuited to the thought and feeling of to-day. The difficulties in the way of its revision are manifestly enormous, through the legal “establishment” of the Anglican Church, in addition to the divisions within its pale. But unless some real changes are made in the direction not of Rome but of a rational faith, the whole Anglican Church will be but a trammelled approximation to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. METHODISM

Methodism represents a large and powerful section of the Catholic Church of Christ; but like Anglicanism is itself divided into distinct portions. The most numerous, wealthiest, and most influential of these, is known as “Wesleyan Methodism.” The next in importance is the “United Methodist Church,” which is really a combination of three previously existing sections, namely, the “New Connection,” “Free Methodists,” and “Bible

Christians." But the "Primitive Methodists" are also increasing in numbers, social position, and influence. A smaller section known as "Reformers," exists only in certain large towns. For a long time efforts have been strenuously made—and equally opposed—to bring about a union of these larger sections, under the single name of Methodism. This will probably soon be accomplished, in spite of strenuous opposition. Of the three main branches of Methodism at present, Wesleyan Methodism is not only the most influential, but the most conservative. It clings tenaciously to the memory of John Wesley, and maintains his *Notes on the New Testament*, and certain of his "sermons," as its standard of doctrine. It comes much nearer to the Established Church in form of worship, as well as in spiritual attitude, than the other sections. In many cases, indeed, especially in the suburbs of London and in wealthier churches elsewhere, the Anglican Liturgy is still employed on Sunday mornings, and the Prayer Book forms are followed for the Sacramental services. Also, the aloofness from or objection to politics as part of Church work, is as definitely maintained as in the Anglican Church. It maintains a high standard of culture amongst its nearly 4000 ministers, and the number of University graduates increases yearly. But its constitution has gradually become much more democratic, with the adoption of "lay representation" in Conference, some thirty years ago. It is also true, to speak definitely from personal knowledge, that there is no body of free and intelligent men on earth, amongst whom a more genuine and practical brotherhood exists than among its ministers. This brotherly spirit has been, and yet is, continually fostered by a principle of itinerancy, which, with certain exceptions amongst officials in Departments and a few special cases, compels each minister to change his *Circuit* every three years. The unquestionable cost and incon-

venience of this arrangement seem to be, on the whole, fully repaid by its advantages.

There is in Wesleyan Methodism, as a whole, much more unity of doctrine than obtains in the Anglican Church, by reason of the test which applies personally to every minister, at the annual May Synod, where each man is called upon to answer the question—"Does he believe and preach our doctrines?" There is, however, a real though indefinite cleavage of opinion as to what an affirmative answer to that query involves. One section which is undoubtedly increasing yearly in numbers, intelligence, and influence, interprets freely, as in modern light, what are called the "standards." Their attitude may be fairly termed a mild Modernism. But a minority amongst the ministers, together with a considerable number of ordinary Church members, adopt a more rigid view of "orthodoxy," corresponding to the American "Fundamentalists," under whose influence certain academic degrees have been sent to the leaders of this section. Their monthly organ, known as the *Wesley Bible Union Journal*, denounces in strong language, with no small personal abuse, those who differ from it. The tutors at the colleges, together with one or two well-known ministers, are selected for special condemnation. But all such obscurantism has not prevented the steady development of Wesleyan Methodism in knowledge as well as influence, and the annual Conference continues to maintain a wisely tolerant attitude towards both sections, so long as manifest Christian character and spiritual devotion remain. This vast assembly, consisting of about a thousand ministers and almost as many laymen, increases each year in influence, and one may say with all carefulness, in Christian wisdom. It is not too much to affirm that in its whole constitution, as well as in all that it represents and rules, it is as near an approximation to the New Testament ideal of a Christian

Church as has ever been known in history, or can be found elsewhere in the modern world.

Much the same may be said concerning the other branches of Methodism known as the "United Methodists" and "Primitives." What they lack comparatively in wealth and influence, they make up for in doctrinal liberty and practical democracy. There is in these sections of Methodism, neither room nor need for any obscurantist "union"; for their ministers are not as rigidly bound to bygone forms or statements, nor does the dead hand of John Wesley grip their formularies, any more than the Anglican Prayer Book rules their public worship. Their revolt from and attitude towards the "old body," was doubtless in some measure a reaction from the clerical claims and ecclesiastical tyrannies which had developed in the Methodism that grew up after Wesley's death. Thus at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Methodist New Connection, then the Primitives, and the Bible Christians, severed their relations with the Wesleyan section; whilst in the middle of that century, the revolt of 1849 resulted in the formation of the "Free Churches" and the "Reformers." Whether these sections have always been true to the Apostolic ideal in 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, may perhaps be questioned. But it is plain that their strong anti-sacerdotal convictions have caused one main hindrance to the movement for the reuniting of all lesser bodies into one organic Methodist union. In accord, however, with the spirit of the age, Wesleyan Methodism also has been compelled to become more democratic. There is little doubt, therefore, that in spite of all the opposition from the more conservative and ecclesiastical ministers and laymen, the general union contemplated will be brought to pass at no distant date. Certainly, then, the gains accruing from a wider brotherhood, together with greater Christian liberty, and more efficient practical

working, will more than compensate for the loss of any minority whose clinging to old associations and ecclesiastical traditions, may cause them to forsake the larger Methodist brotherhood and revert to Anglicanism.

3. PRESBYTERIANISM

As I have had no intimate personal experience of this portion of the Catholic Church, it may be best for the sake of accuracy to refer to the excellent summary of the history and principles of Presbyterianism in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, from which the following excerpts may suffice :

“ The name Presbyterian may be applied generally to that theory of the Church which aims at realizing its visible unity through government by Presbyters, clerical and lay, such Presbyters being set apart by their peers with popular consent, and being all of equal status. It thus represents a distinctive type of doctrine, morals, and ritual, and in one form or another counts to-day some 100,000,000 adherents. It seeks to avoid on the one hand the absolute subjection of individual congregations to government from without, and on the other hand, their absolute independence of all restraint. All forms of Church government are ultimately reducible to three—the Prelatic, the Congregational, and the Presbyterian. Of these three great types, it is therefore the middle one, between Congregationalism and Episcopacy.

“ Presbyterianism recognizes more fully than Independency that in order to secure the three great things, true preaching, true administration of the sacraments, and true discipline within an orderly and united body of believers, a certain amount of organization is inevitable, even if of secondary importance. The founders of Presbyterianism went to the New Testament for their models. In so far as they attempted, or claimed to effect, an exact and mechanical reproduction of the New Testament Church, they were mistaken. But they may at least claim to have worked out a system as nearly like it as anything that can hope to adapt itself to modern times.”

The general Presbyterian attitude may be fairly judged

from the utterance of the Moderator of the Belfast Presbytery for this year (1926)—Rev. R. J. Patterson, LL.B. :

“ We shall conquer the world and one another by personal and not by logical influences. No controversy conducted along the lines of what is called “ The Historic Episcopate ” will ever induce ministers of the Presbyterian order to submit to re-ordination. I often wonder at the Lambethian mentality that can go on imagining that Presbyterians will ever sacrifice their principles on the altar of either policy or polity. The Church of Christ is wide enough to embrace all who love Him in sincerity, no matter to what persuasion they belong. For Christianity is not so much a system of thought expressed in a creed, as it is a power of God manifested in life. We must make a distinction between Churchianity and Christianity. Churchianity coddles, Christianity conquers. The times demand more Christian conquest, and less ecclesiastical coddling. The Church is in the world to win the world for Christ, and no Church is worthy of the name that puts sectarianism before cosmopolitanism.”

Of any section of the true Catholic Church which thus speaks, it may be fairly said that it is at least a helpful approximation to the ideal Christianity of the New Testament.

4. CONGREGATIONALISM

As contrasted with the preceding systems, it has been said that Congregationalism is given over to individualism. Speaking from personal experience as well as from prolonged observation, it must be acknowledged that this estimate is fairly true. The individualism of Congregationalism is indeed not only intense, but twofold. Each Church stands absolutely by itself, elects its own minister, appoints its own officers, and decides its own laws. Again, in every Congregational Church each member has his own distinct vote in every Church meeting. As this is the supreme Church Court for all the affairs of the Church, individuality thus counts to the uttermost.

The history of this numerous and influential cult, from the time of the Brownists at the close of the sixteenth century to the present day, will be found elsewhere. It is evident that such unfettered liberty of thought and action, could not but afford wide scope for differences of opinion as well as of polity. On the whole, the theology of Congregationalism has been what is known as evangelical, though sometimes with a definite Calvinistic tinge, and recently with a "broad" tendency. But during the last few years the need for some closer association and more real bond of brotherhood between individual churches, has resulted in the formation of a Congregational Union, which has become one of the most potent influences in modern British Christianity. It bids fair still to increase that influence, by reason of the combination of a high average of intellectual development with spiritual devotion, amongst its ministers and laymen, whilst maintaining unceasing loyalty to Congregational principles. These principles are more strongly opposed to sacerdotalism, in all its forms, than either Methodism or Presbyterianism. It is no less distinct from both these, by the intense interest which it takes in politics.

It must, however, in all truth to facts, be acknowledged to be a system of extremes. In some cases, numbers of members and adherents, wealth and happy fellowship, with corresponding influence for good in the environment, seem to point to as near an approximation to the Christian ideal Church as human nature permits. But in too many other cases, personal divisions and jealousies, financial difficulties, harsh and heartless treatment of the pastor in charge, cause anything but a happy fellowship. It is true that there are no Congregational ministers in receipt of such yearly incomes as those of the Anglican archbishops and bishops. But there are much greater differences in stipends—with the accompanying comforts and advantages

—than would be tolerated in Methodism. Not a few cases of tragic penury and pitiful suffering for want of support, occur in the smaller Churches, and constitute a painful parallel to the condition of many half-starved curates with families, in the Anglican Church. Still, viewed as a whole, there is every prospect of Congregationalism continuing to contribute a very important part to the Christianity of the future in this country. Especially in that adaptation to environment which must somehow be brought to pass, if the Christian faith is to survive, let alone grow, in the time to come. For Congregationalism has no settled creed, and its whole attitude is well expressed in the excellent summary found in the *Encyclopædia* mentioned above. As to doctrine :

“ Congregational Churches in common with Protestantism in general, have been passing through a period of theological unsettlement. This is the inevitable result of Biblical criticism, the general prevalence of an evolutionary view of creation and of history, the new emphasis upon the divine immanence, and a quickened conception of social service as part of Christian life, whether for individuals or for Churches. No body of Christians has been more ready to welcome these newer views than Congregationalism. But the degree in which they have been accepted, varies widely in different Churches. It is not sufficient, however, to disturb their sense of fellowship, and of continuity with their historic past, or the broad fundamental outlines of their conception of the meaning of the Gospel.”

On the whole, therefore, this section also of the Church Catholic may truly be estimated as a real approximation to the ideal Christianity of the New Testament.

5. THE BAPTIST UNION

The main and almost only difference between the Congregational and Baptist Churches relates to the time and manner of baptism, as one of the only two sacraments acknowledged by Protestants. Taken as a whole, all

Baptists are one in denying the rightfulness or utility of infant baptism, and in affirming that the rite can only be Christian and significant when it is preceded by definite personal conviction and a profession of faith. So far as politics are concerned, their attitude is one with that of Congregationalism, both as to the inseparable connection between Christian principles and political action, and in taking the side which is generally known as "liberal." Theologically, also, there is great similarity between these two sections of modern Christendom ; although the Baptist Churches generally are more definitely Calvinistic. They are, however, divided into two fairly distinct classes. The one generally known as "Particular Baptists," contains those who are very strict in their conditions of membership, and in "fencing the table," that is, excluding from participating with them in the Lord's Supper, all who have not been received, through baptism by immersion, into their communion. Many of them also hold strong views upon election and predestination ; basing these upon rigid belief in the verbal inspiration of the "Authorized" Version of the Bible. These are found mostly in the smaller churches, either in the country or in less important towns.

The other section known as "General Baptists," though equally pronounced opponents of Pædobaptism, have a much broader theology, with little or no reference to election, and with willingness to welcome to the Lord's Table any who evince sincere desire for Christian fellowship. The late Dr. J. Clifford was the most outstanding and noble example of this type of Christian devotion. His widespread fame and influence were of immeasurable value in elevating the ideals and quickening the devotion of the Free Churches generally. His stalwart opposition to sacerdotal ecclesiasticism was combined with ceaseless efforts on behalf of social righteousness. Meanwhile,

preachers like Drs. Chas. Brown and F. Norwood, and teachers like Dr. T. R. Glover, have maintained the high standard set by such men as Drs. Parker, Hunter, Berry, Jowett, and a host of others in the Free Churches ; showing beyond controversy that in character, scholarship, preaching ability, and devotion, "Nonconformists" are not one whit behind the noblest leaders of the Anglican Church.

6. THE SALVATION ARMY

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a young man named William Booth, only twenty-two years of age, joined the community known as "Reformers," which had split off from Wesleyan Methodism through disputes concerning methods of Church government. Soon after he became a minister in the then "Methodist New Connection." But his ardent evangelical zeal could not find scope enough in their ordinary circuit work. It was not long, therefore, before he and his devoted wife, Catherine, left the Connection, and began to conduct special religious services in their own way, throughout the country. He was soon drawn to London, and gave himself to devoted labours in Whitechapel. In his address to the Wesleyan Conference in 1880, he described himself and his fellow-workers as "moral scavengers who netted the very sewers."—"We want all we can get, but especially we want the lowest of the low." It is truly said of him that "no more than George Fox in the seventeenth century, or John Wesley in the eighteenth, did Wm. Booth intend to form a new sect. But some society had to be formed, to keep new converts together, and a semi-military constitution seemed best suited to their needs." It was when "Commissioner Railton" wrote that "our Christian Mission is a voluntary army," that Wm. Booth corrected it into "a salvation army." From that time, the name by

which it is now known all over the world, was adopted. Its wonderful work cannot be described in few words. But once again an excellent summary is given in the *Encyclopædia* before named, which merits the careful appreciation of every sincere thinker.

It must be owned that, in many respects, this great movement constitutes a most real and potent approximation to the Christianity of the New Testament. Most assuredly is it much nearer to the teaching and example of Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels, than all the centuries of sacerdotal ecclesiasticism, or the ceaseless conflicts of Protestantism concerning theology and Church government. It is true that both George Fox and John Wesley had previously shown equal personal devotion, but Wesley was hampered even to the end by ecclesiastical limitations and sacerdotal tendencies, and these were enshrined in the organization which his genius created. Whilst George Fox, whom we must presently consider, had not before him the tremendous problems of our great crowded cities and the welter of their slums, which so stirred the soul of William Booth. Apart from the peculiarities of its pseudo-military constitution, the "army" differs in but two respects from the general standard of doctrine which prevails throughout evangelical Christianity.

One of its foundation principles is that "for any position, up to generalship itself, women are as eligible as men." It is thus true to Gal. iii. 28, and the whole spirit of the New Testament, as is no other Christian community, with the one exception of the Society of Friends. Only very slowly, even in the Free Churches of this country, is the assumed superiority of the male sex being set aside on Christian principles.¹ In the Romish

¹ Only last year (1926) at the Wesleyan Conference at York, the motion to admit women into the regular Ministry was "turned down" by a considerable majority of votes.

and Anglican Churches this Pagan and Jewish assumption still obtains, to such an extent that the very idea of women preaching in the ordinary way, or conducting the Communion service, is regarded with horror. Strongest reference is always made to Paul's views expressed in 1 Tim. ii. 11-15—as if these were the Christian law for all time. But the marvellous development of the Army and its unmeasured influence for good, have abundantly justified its attitude, and confirmed the Apostolic ideal in the letter to the Galatians, as the only permanent principle of the relation between the sexes which deserves the name of Christian. The other references to the position of women in the Church, have to be interpreted, on all grounds of honest and intelligent exegesis, by the rest of the whole New Testament. They are easily intelligible under the conditions of the times in which the Apostle lived, and especially in the light of such environments as Corinth and Ephesus would supply. The bias of Paul in this respect, moreover, is quite accounted for by his Rabbinic training, and ought not to prevail against his own later and broader vision. Still less can it be allowed to stand against the unmistakable estimate of womanhood which is manifest in the Gospels.

The other main matter in which the Army, like the Society of Friends, departs from the usage of Christendom, is in regard to the Sacraments. The best account of their attitude herein is given by the present General himself. Says Mr. Wm. Bramwell Booth :

“ The administration of the Sacraments was abandoned in 1882, and all ritual which might be supposed to contain some intrinsic or magical merit, was put on one side. The Army has never denied the value of the Sacraments in individual cases, and indeed occasionally its members have been granted liberty to partake of these ordinances in one or other of the Churches. But the broad fact upon which the Salvation Army rests, is that the Sacraments are not necessary for salvation, whether salvation is considered as an

act of Divine grace, or as a whole life. The Army takes the simple utilitarian ground that these observances introduce complication, that they are open to argument and attack, and that by many who would participate they would not be understood, and, most important of all, they would often obscure the necessity for a vital experience."

The theology of the Army is confessedly "evangelical," in the simplest and crudest sense. The Bible is accepted without any qualification as "the Word of God"; no notice being taken either of the Revised Version, or of modern critical knowledge. The old doctrines of original sin, total depravity, a definite future Day of Judgement, followed by a concrete Heaven or Hell, with the prospect of eternal punishment, being assumed in all their public appeals and avowed experiences. The Salvationist vision is that of a wicked world full of "perishing souls," to save whom any extravagant device may be employed. However little such a mental attitude may be approved by modern thought, the actual work of the Army has largely justified itself, alike by its marvellous development, and by the unquestionable change for the better which has been wrought in literally millions of human characters. Its flag has been unfurled now in every part of the world. Its official paper, the *War Cry*, with its eighty companions in twenty different languages, has a combined circulation of more than 7,000,000.

Its special mission has always been to the poorest, or most degraded, who are so largely untouched by other Churches. But the remarkable development of its "social wing," has been an unmeasured boon to thousands who could not be so described. One of the greatest sources of power in the work of the Army has been, and is, its use of music, especially such as appeals to "the man in the street." Army song-books with hymns set to all the most popular tunes, are being sung throughout the world, under

the guidance of 30,000 bandsmen and 20,000 members of Songsters' Brigades, with immeasurable effect. Its social work, in twenty distinct organizations for the benefit of the poor and friendless of every land, is being carried on with unflagging zeal. There is no indication that the great work begun by William Booth is losing its hold on the people who most of all need its help. Inasmuch as the Gospels plainly declare concerning Jesus that "the common people heard Him gladly," the whole attitude and devotion of the Salvation Army may well be regarded as one of the truest approximations to His ideal in the whole history of Christianity. Its purity of motive, noble ideals, and self-sacrificing devotion, have completely triumphed over the public scorn, the bitter opposition, and the cruel persecution, which combined against its initial stages.

7. SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

The Pauline avowal that "there are diversities of operations but the same spirit," finds no more manifest illustration than in the differences and likenesses which exist between the Salvation Army and the "Society of Friends," so often in popular speech termed "Quakers." This comparison has been mentioned above, and only calls here for confirmation. Both the likenesses and differences are most pronounced. George Fox, whom the Governor of Scarborough declared to be "as stiff as a tree and as pure as a bell," was in his own way as remarkable a man and as devoted a follower of Christ, as John Wesley or William Booth, Luther or Paul. But partly through the development of his own "meek and quiet spirit," which was yet ever fearless in contending against wrong, the whole atmosphere of the Society to which he gave rise, has tended to conceal rather than to display his goodness and greatness. No few words can do justice to his life and

labours. Sir George Newman has truly said that—"The Anglo-Saxon race throughout the world, is the better for the spiritual seeking and struggles and victories of George Fox." Whilst the erudite and impartial psychologist, William James, has declared in his famous book on *The Varieties of Religious Experience* that—

"The Quaker religion which Fox founded is something which it is impossible to overpraise. In a day of shams it was a religion of veracity, rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like an original Gospel truth than men had ever known in England. So far as our Christian sects to-day are evolving into liberality, they are simply reverting in essence to the position which Fox and the early Quakers so long ago assumed."

It must suffice here to think first upon the points of likeness, and then those of difference, between the devotion of those who venerate the name of Fox, and those who have been and still are under the leadership of the remarkable Booth family.

The name "Quakers" was applied to the first "Friends," in the middle of the seventeenth century, much as was the term Methodists at Oxford in the eighteenth, rather as a token of derision than respect. The proper name, "Religious Society of Friends," was not adopted until 1800. But in five distinct respects they anticipated the convictions and methods of the Salvation Army. (i) The great condition and essential of salvation was individual experience; (ii) experience must be so real and deep, that the whole life became sacramental; (iii) there was no sex distinction, women being quite as fitted as men for all spiritual work; (iv) their doctrine of "the inner light" involved a high development of personal devotion; (v) this was also always associated with a correspondingly lofty ethical standard and far-reaching social sympathies, together with defiance of conventional doctrines and methods.

On the other hand, the friends who followed the leading

of George Fox were, and are, strongly opposed to some of the elements which contributed not a little to the success of the Salvation Army. They had such distrust of all officialism that they would have no paid ministry. They shrank with horror from anything approaching military organization, and were uncompromising pacifists. They had no need or place for music ; and in all their meetings for worship, they cultivated a habit of silence which is the very opposite of the methods of Salvationists. In the words of Professor Graham—"God had no need of our words in His worship, only the loyalty of our hearts. Peace, let us think." It is a good lesson, and our increasingly neurotic age needs it more than ever. He also says that—"George Fox's attack fell upon all the incrustations of Symbolism, on all official priestly functions and authority, on all routine in ritual, or prayers out of a book, on all paid preachers with specialized training."

In theology also, the attitude of the Friends is very different from that of the Salvation Army. George Fox made indeed no definite departure from the system in which he had been brought up. But—"Though they were unaware of it, the early Friends were Modernists all the time, but Modernism was not their message, nor their concern. They denied that sin was essential either to salvation, or to human life, and dismissed the notion of imputed righteousness." Their central doctrine of the indwelling God of truth and love, gave them a very different standpoint from the extreme evangelicalism, based on an inerrant and infallible Bible, which characterized both John Wesley and William Booth. But they certainly did, under the leadership of George Fox, "abandon all their most sacred associations in Church and Sacrament, take the Bible in a new way, and in reliance on the indwelling God go to prison, exile, or death, with joy and newness of life." "To-day," adds Professor Graham, "his followers,

though numbering only 20,000 in England, hold staff appointments in many armies of goodwill. The Society is neither dead nor dying.—‘Friends’ hold with confidence to their ancient faith, and with hope to their future service.”

It has been freely acknowledged in the Introduction, that all these preceding summaries are but vignettes. But their main features are true, and more is here unnecessary. Many volumes would confessedly be required to do justice to the historic or doctrinal details in each case. But the landscape view from a mountain-top has its value and significance, whether for the artist or the army Commander, without the minute scrutiny of every portion of it. “Christianity” and “Christendom” are naturally nebulous terms, by reason of their comprehensiveness. Yet they represent realities, and not mere imaginations. There is no greater question for the politics, economics, and sociology of to-day, as really as for religion, than whether the following years of this century are to witness the coming of Christ’s Kingdom, in the sense in which He meant it, through a truly Catholic Church, or the mere persistence of a number of esoteric religious societies, bearing His name but failing to incarnate His spirit.

NOTE.—It may be asked why, in the “approximations” to ideal Christianity, Unitarianism is not as definitely included as the rest here specified. The explanation certainly does not in the least ignore or underrate the lofty intellectual, moral, and spiritual characteristics of that section of Christendom. But, as stated on p. 19, this whole work proceeds upon the assumption that the New Testament conveys “the truth concerning Jesus Christ, His person, character, and teaching”; and noble as is the Theistic and ethical attitude of Unitarianism, I cannot concede that its tenets do justice to the whole truth concerning Jesus, either in the Gospels or Epistles. So that it comes rather under the head of twentieth-century religion, in general, than in connection with the teaching and influence of the Churches which everywhere specifically represent Christianity.

V

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE FUTURE

1. LIFE AND GROWTH

THE preceding reference to the main sections of modern Christendom as "approximations" to the Christian ideal, is not intended to convey any note of depreciation. To put it mathematically, there is something asymptotic in the best efforts of the best men and churches to reach the standard of Jesus Christ as the New Testament portrays it. Possibly, in the present realm of being it will never be attained. But it may be said with all deliberate truthfulness that Christianity, as a whole, is nearer "the mind of the Master" to-day than ever before in its history. The perversions certainly exist, and some of them are as vigorous as weeds are apt to be. But they are not necessarily perennial, and there is some reason to hope that the future will surely, even if slowly, transmute them into approximations. The way, however, to accelerate such transformation, will not be found in desperate efforts to achieve organic unity by crushing the idiosyncrasies of sincere conviction. Such a demand for uniformity of belief and action, would only be to add the task of Sisyphus to that of Hercules, and attempt the impossible.

But there need be no mourning over the certainty that such uniformity will never come to pass. It is no more necessary, or desirable in religion than in nature. Roses may be the most beautiful flowers known; but it would

be much more of a curse than a blessing, if all earth's floral loveliness were to be turned into a rose garden. Nor even if apples are to be considered a most beneficial fruit, would it be for the well-being of mankind that all other fruits should be destroyed to make room for them. In the higher human realm, was there ever in any large family one child such that the father or mother desired that all the other children should be in every particular the exact replica of that one? There is no plainer or more significant statement in all the New Testament than that "there are diversities of operations but the same Spirit." Applying that, as honest thought is bound to do, on the world scale, there are other religions than Christianity which have their millions of sincere devotees. That is no valid argument for the cessation of Christian Foreign Missions, when it is understood that Christianity is the truest and best of all. But it is a protest against the notion that "salvation," in the Christian sense, means the compulsion of a Christian East to follow in all respects the conventions of a Christian West.¹ In what is known as Christendom, the only unity worth thinking about, is that which is made up of variety. "The unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"—is all that is either possible or desirable.

It would indeed be no fanciful illustration if one were to liken the spiritual case to the physical. There are, as mentioned above, seven main sections of British Christianity which count in national life—just as there are seven distinct colours in the solar spectrum. It would be calamity indeed to have to live in any one of these. A few days of all red light, or blue, would make the thoughtless mob, no less than the man of science, crave the return

¹ This is most impressively demonstrated in the volume by Dr. Stanley Jones, entitled *The Christ of the Indian Road*, which merits the special attention of every sympathizer with Foreign Missions.

of the ordinary daylight which is considered colourless, and provokes no thanksgiving. The simple truth, of course, is that what is deemed colourless but is known to be best, is just a combination of all the seven. Even so it may be truly said that when the devoted Anglican, or Methodist, or Baptist, or any other, cherishes the notion that if only all other Christians shared his convictions, and endorsed his attitudes, the millennium would be at hand—he is as deluded as the child who, because he loves the grass-green fields, wishes all the light were green about him day by day. The seven distinct colours are beautiful enough in a rainbow—but the world's work cannot be done in its light, be it ever so brilliant. As each colour contributes its share to the beneficent whole which brightens our life, so may there well issue from the different creeds and lives of “the seven churches,” a truer and fuller witness to Christian truth than could ever be borne by any one of them alone.

Here are the facts. These seven—to say nothing now of the minor sections which by reason of their very sincerity merit respectful notice—are in many respects irreconcilable. But each section is supported by numbers of adherents equally sincere, intelligent, and devoted. What is the inevitable inference? Surely this—there is some one distinctive reality in Christian experience, which is as independent of credal, or formal, or governmental form, as water poured into a vessel is of the shape of the vessel. To a Samaritan woman Jesus spoke plainly of some “living water” which He would give to every real disciple. What did He mean? His own description of it elsewhere was “eternal life,” where certainly, as noted above, “eternal” is qualitative and says nothing about duration, but everything about the true disciple's experience. John confirmed this with the assumption that those to whom he was writing actually had it. There is no reason to suppose

that they were in any sense better than modern Christians who show the reality of their discipleship by enrolling themselves in some church, and sharing its confessions and obligations. In some way, and to some extent, they have all some part in the fulfilment of the assurance of Jesus—"I am come that they may have life, and may have it in surpassing measure." "Surpassing," here as in Matt. v. 47, is indeed the true meaning of the word He used. Wherein, then, does it surpass? Surely, really and only in such conscious communion with God as is beyond defining, but may be as actual as consciousness. There is no need to coin a new word and call it "numinous," which to most people in these realms will be meaningless. It will suffice, and will come as near to reality as words can express, if we speak of *spiritual life* as being the real meaning of Jesus, and the very essence of His Gospel in human hearts. It was well said by Dr. Skrine, in *The Times*, not long since, that—

"The faith once for all delivered, is neither a belief nor an institution nor a practice, but a principle comprehending them all. It is a life unto God, created in mankind by the act on earth of Jesus of Nazareth. Here is the issue between the 'Catholic' (that is, Romanist) or Fundamentalist of this day, and the Modernist. Is the faith once delivered a creed, or is it a life? Christians whose minds are too fixedly rooted in conceptions of the past, may contend earnestly for a faith which is a creed, but no earnestness will make that contention win."

Similarly Dr. Bindley, discussing at Cambridge what degree of unity of faith would be necessary for a reunited Church, said that—

"Christianity is a life, not an intellectual assent to facts. It is a devotion to a person, not a subscription to documentary statements. Faith is trust in a person, not assent to a fact; a dynamic emotion, not an intellectual achievement, a personal devotion to One whom we can trust."

To say that Christianity is a life, means indeed very much. It implies that the essence of Christianity is an experience, not a mere mental attitude; an ideal of character, not an ecclesiastical system; rational service, not blind submission to tradition, or superstition, or convention; an offer of blessing, not a threat of condemnation; communion with a loving Father, not cowering before an angry Judge. But if Christianity is essentially a life, a higher life, an actuality of soul communion with God, then four features of the case must be acknowledged. For these are always true, unmistakably and inevitably, of all life, in every grade, from the monad up to man. (1) Life cannot be defined. No man knows what it is; we only know that it is. (2) But wherever there is life, there is growth. (3) Wherever there is growth, there is variety. (4) The maintenance of life, in all degrees, depends always upon adaptation to environment. Inasmuch as these four become ever more marked as life ascends in the biological scale, so that an orchid, for instance, exemplifies them much more than a blade of grass, and a human babe much more than cod spawn, it may well be that their fullest application is to that highest type of life which Jesus came to make possible for mortals, and which may be termed "spiritual," or, in New Testament language, "eternal," or, when we mean our words, simply "Christian."

We have sufficiently noticed above, and appreciated, the irrepressible variety of forms which Christian life obtains in these days. And it is indeed a marvel, a miracle of growth, that out of the handful of "unlearned and ignorant men" who comprised the beginning of Christianity, there should have evolved a Christendom with 560,000,000 adherents, the mightiest religion on earth. But if we are to face the future, and remember that there are now 1,800,000,000 human beings to consider, with the certainty of increase, the main matter for concern is adaptation to

environment. Let it be granted that for real Christianity there must be a radical spiritual experience; that this spiritual life may so grow in knowledge, charity, and sympathy, as to make the varieties of belief and practice which characterize the churches, reasons for mutual respect rather than occasions for bigotry, then there arises a possibility, which develops into a hope, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may indeed prove itself to be "the salt of the earth and the light of the world." Whether that is ever to become anything more than a pious dream, will depend upon the degree in which such a Christianity can and does adapt itself to the modern human environment. The outspoken words of the Bishop of Aberdeen recently, apply to all other churches equally with his own :

"Unless the Anglican Church shows itself to be capable of radical reconstruction and reform, and of adapting itself to new conditions in new days, it is going the way of the *deinosauros* and the *brontosaurus*. In thousands of our parishes we are content to muddle along instead of learning new methods and ways. We learn nothing and forget nothing, obstinately clinging to obsolete ways, teaching the faith in a dead language which our youth does not understand. Why do we allow ourselves to be bound by senile teaching? Because we allow our Church service to be the services of the Hanoverian and Victorian ages, we are losing thousands who have a true longing for the Church of God."

Manifestly, the whole matter calls for further serious consideration.

2. ADAPTATION TO ENVIRONMENT

It is always true that a living thing not only depends upon environment, but exercises some real influence upon it. So through all the ages, and in spite of all perversions, Christianity has wielded unmeasured influence for good, and the world would have been immeasurably poorer and darker without it. It has tended to purify the moral

atmosphere as surely as a splendid pine forest makes the air curative for consumptives. But before the pines can give forth their healing breezes, they must adapt themselves to their environment—or die. It is no less true and imperative for Christianity, as a type of highest life and healing power, that it too must recognize its environment and behave accordingly. It is equally useless to rail at it or resist. If Christian life and living influence are to go on, there must be adaptation. It is here that the possibilities of variable growth come in. The problem of variations yet remains the crux of organic evolution. But the fact continues that through variations organisms do adapt themselves to their environment, and so go on to live. Hence, in regard to Christianity, no New Testament phrase has been more mischievously stressed in the interests of obscurantism, than that taken from the opening words of Jude's letter—"exhorting to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." The interpretation of such words as meaning that at some definite time, either in the first or the sixteenth century, a rigid cast-iron system of theology was let down from heaven, like Muhammad's Koran, to which nothing must be added and from which nothing must be taken, is as false in itself as it has been tragic in its consequences. One might as well say that a human babe is "once for all" delivered to its parents, and therefore must spend all the rest of its life in swaddling bands. If the Christianity of Jude's age had not understood the Apostolic ideal better than that, it would never have survived at all. It has remained indestructible through all the buffetings of the ages, because of the adaptability of its essential life to the ever-changing environment from which it could not escape.

To-day, cynical critics say that "Christianity must either be mended or ended," because of its "comparative failure." There is no fear of the latter happening. Of all

the false as well as foolish attempts at summarizing the effects of the late dire war, that of Mr. Arnold Bennett must have the pre-eminence ; seeing that in the " Rationalist " Annual he openly declared that " the great event of the war " was " the final destruction of Christianity " ! It was but a sort of Brocken spectre of his own wish. We will take careful note, later on, of the present-day facts which make his funereal suggestion ridiculous. For the moment, it is enough to emphasize its falsity. In spite of all modern hindrances and difficulties, the perversions of Christianity are less serious, and its approximations to Christ's ideal more near, than ever before ; and therein lies the hope of the future.

At the same time, that hope is conditioned. It is as when Paul, threatened with speedy death at sea, sought to cheer his despairing companions by the assurance of deliverance which he had received from an " angel of God " — " Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even so as it has been spoken to me." But it was not long after when we find him saying sternly to the centurion — " Unless these sailors remain in the ship, you cannot be saved." Even so, those Christians who are least disposed to tremble at " Rationalist " threatenings, will be most ready to share Paul's common sense, and face all the dangers of the situation with wisdom as well as confidence. No man whom honest perception saves from blind fanaticism, can fail to see that from the truly Christian standpoint, there are many features in the human environment of to-day which are as serious as lamentable. Here, we can only think of these British realms, and leave to other occasions the estimate of the Continent. But for the purpose of an impressive estimate, we need not go very far back. It is quite unnecessary to recall the times of Wesley, or the battle of Waterloo. If we start in thought with the middle of the last century, and compare the

religious atmosphere and the environment of the Churches at that day with what we now find, the changes are, to say the least, immeasurable in their significance. Here is a fair summary by a well-qualified public man. Says Dr. Albert Peel :

“ It no longer pays in any material sense to be a Christian ; churchgoing is no longer an asset to the tradesman or the society climber. A large proportion of our people are frankly pagan. Sunday is a day of pleasure rather than of rest or worship ; the improved means of travel, the week-end habit, the spread of Sunday games, and the increased number of Sunday newspapers, all make the day count for less and less in the religious life of our land. War has left behind its usual moral reaction, and the present generation has new standards in every department of life. The great lack of the present day is that of authority. The Bible, the Church, the law, the parent, are all ignored to a greater or less degree in the search for pleasure, relaxation, self-expression, and a ‘ good time.’ All this shows itself in decreased attendances at worship, and a decline in Church membership, especially in the Free Churches, where preaching has always stressed the sense of responsibility in the need for dedicated lives.”

All this, we know, is true, and more might be added. What does it all come to ? If the “ final destruction of Christianity ” which Mr. Arnold Bennett and his friends so desire, be but a “ Rationalist ” nightmare, what sober counsels should prevail if the mending rather than the ending of Christianity is to ensue ? Some words from *The Times* recently, succinctly summarize the situation :

“ The only thing perhaps about which we can be sure beforehand, is that the Christianity of the future will not be exactly that of the past, and yet will not disavow its essential features. The old is always dying and the new being born, but there is no breach of continuity. The new could not be born except of the old, and the old gives evidence of life, not of death, in being transformed into the new. Neither pleasant Sunday afternoons nor political or literary lectures, nor organ recitals, will save chapels or churches or cathedrals from emptiness. If men do not come to church to pray, they will not come at all. ‘ What think ye of Christ ? ’ is then the

question which must always continue to be asked. And it will always demand an answer which will be partly old and partly new."

In order to appreciate this need for growth in Christian thought and practice, which shall "mend" the Christianity of to-day by adapting its life to the changed and changing conditions of the age, let us glance, as carefully as briefly, at some of the unmistakable and irresistible developments in our national life during the last fifty years.

(i) The general diffusion of knowledge since 1870 does not admit of summarizing. But the plain fact is that the children of that time who grew up under the influence of that great educational crisis, not only became more intelligent citizens than this country had ever known, but are now entering upon old age with ideals of education for their children, such as even at that time were inconceivable. The mental effect of all this is immeasurable. For Christian preachers, and teachers, and churches, it certainly means that the former methods of appeal are as insufficient as would be the weapons of war, or means of transport, then employed, for the needs of to-day. The Dean of St. Paul's, with his usual frankness, has summed up the situation :

"If we consider the causes of the decadence of clericalism, we shall find them in circumstances which are inevitable, and not discreditable to any one. The whole system of public worship was designed for a state of society when very few persons read and very many were unable to read. Now we have become a reading nation. We all have access to the best that has been thought and said on the spiritual life, without troubling the parson ; he is no longer better instructed than his congregation ; the metaphor of a shepherd and his sheep has become absurd."

(ii) With the growth of knowledge has come, inevitably, the increase of liberty. Not of thought, for that cannot be restricted, but of speech, and act, and general behaviour. This also is as difficult to describe as it is impossible to deny. It is an atmosphere rather than a proclamation.

It may be most noticeable in children and young life, but it runs through all society. No one can live in a large city without feeling its influence, whilst even in the country, whether the yokel touches his cap to the parson and the squire or not—now, more often, not—he knows that he is a British citizen, and not merely a “hand,” and the ballot-box gives him a liberty of choice which no man can take away from him.

(iii) In general, to quote Mr. Benjamin Kidd—“The fact of our time which overshadows all others, is the arrival of Democracy.” Of this more presently. Enough now, to bear it in mind, with all its significance as a contribution to the environment. The unprecedented extension of the franchise—even to the inclusion of young women—creates an entirely new situation, with which religion no less than politics has to reckon.

(iv) The arrival of democracy has come to pass through the vast increase in population, and the consequent quickening of the pace of social life, together with the intensification of the struggle for existence in business life; alike on the small and the large scale. The condition of myriads in our midst, mostly in the congested cities, but to some extent also in the country, is such as to make any such appeal to their higher nature, “their soul’s welfare,” an almost meaningless or quixotic suggestion. The depressing curse of unemployment has grown from more to more; whilst well-to-do Sunday congregations, comfortable ministers’ houses, and bishops’ palaces, are in close proximity with miserable back streets, dirty slums, and dens where overcrowding, too repulsive to describe, continues. Is there any hope of cleansing these Augean stables of civilization? At least this emerges, that the Christianity which does not try to do something sociological as well as spiritual, will be as “salt that has lost its savour,” and will share the fate which Christ announced.

(v) There is an aspect of this civilized struggle for existence which scarcely receives the attention it merits, from the Christian standpoint. The difficulties and conflicts of employers are obscured in the troubles of the great host of the unemployed. Because the modern "business man" lives in a roomy house, and works in a comfortable "office," it is inferred that he has no burden to bear, and no struggle to wage. But if the democracy were only as fair as it is clamorous, one word would suffice to dispel all envious vision. The "working man" who, rightly or wrongly, grumbles at his "wage," does not know what the word "competition" means. But his employer does. He knows all too well that transactions involving thousands of pounds, may just turn upon the question whether he can "cut out" some rival through a fraction of a penny difference in price. And if he cannot, whence are to come the wages for his hundreds of employes? In a word, put it as politely as you please, the principle of your modern competitive markets is, "Everybody for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." If the miner, or the artisan, did but study carefully the financial sheet in any of our great dailies, and think what it really means in constant worry, he might learn more charity and patience. The point here is that this element in the modern environment, is constituting one of the most real hindrances to the Christian ideal.

(vi) The wondrous development of scientific knowledge and its adaptation to daily life need no describing. Its intellectual influence is even greater than the practical; in the transitional mental atmosphere which it creates, Christian teachers cannot but find difficulties which were entirely unknown to the Churches of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The mental upheaval caused by the work of Darwin, has issued in a general acceptance of the principle of evolution, and its application to religion,

which all the vehemence of Fundamentalism avails nothing to prevent. Its relation to former orthodox theology and anthropology constitutes one of the most difficult problems that the Christian ministry has ever had to face. It is lamentably evident that in this country, almost as keenly as in America, the anti-evolutionist conflict is likely to continue for years to come.

(vii) Alongside the unprecedented diffusion of scientific knowledge, there has come to pass another very different but equally real and increasing development, even the craze for pleasure and irrepressible demand for amusements of all kinds. The necessity as well as advantage of a certain amount of recreation, in relief from carking care or monotonous toil, may be freely conceded. But that reasonable and useful amount bids fair to be unreasonably surpassed by the modern wild rush for "sports." Cricket is now a summer engrossment, football a winter mania, and tennis a general obsession, to an extent which needs no cynic to pronounce serious. But the ever-multiplying opportunities and facilities for sensuous enjoyment, rule out of thought any suggestions of moderation. In such an atmosphere, the Christian ideal of character and service is choked; and whilst the increasing number of women openly smoking detracts from the natural dignity of womanhood, the growing demand for Sunday games not only tends to keep churches empty, but threatens to crush out all sense of sacredness from the one day in the week which is inseparably associated with all that is Christian.

(viii) Another feature of the modern environment which has to be taken into account, of which our fathers knew nothing, is the enormous development of the facilities for travel, through which the world is becoming cosmopolitan. The days when the agricultural labourer was "rooted to the soil," or the artisan confined to the city, are gone for

ever. The whole population of the country is in motion, and a few days serve to transport to the other side of the world those who are dissatisfied with Great Britain. The children who to-day are grouped in one family, will be found in a few years scattered all over the globe. And even in the homeland, such is the marvellous development of railway communication that general restlessness has become the prevalent temper of social life, amongst rich and poor alike. How seriously this affects the maintenance of Church life, both mentally and physically, as well as spiritually, needs no describing.

(ix) But modern unsettlement is by no means confined to practical affairs. This is manifest on every hand, and one must add, to speak the truth, especially in religion. The resistless increase in Biblical and scientific knowledge is by no means confined to Christian teachers in pulpits or colleges. The findings of what is called "criticism"—a perfectly innocent word which has unfortunately taken on a sinister meaning in popular use—whether "higher" or "lower," have inevitably filtered down into pews and schools, so that it is simply impossible that the same conceptions of Christian doctrine should now prevail, as obtained half a century ago. The words of the brave and erudite Bishop of Birmingham, from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey, are as significant as undeniable :

"We are living in a period of vast religious confusion and decay. For well-nigh a century forces have been at work whose effect is now plainly visible in popular thought. The triumphs of the scientific method have been combined with the conclusions of Biblical criticism to make men doubt the truth not only of the first chapter of Genesis, but also of many a New Testament narrative. The drift from the Churches has been widespread. Within them, various types of reaction, products of desperate drives into the past, flourish. Magical sacramentalism, Second Adventism, are variants of primitive beliefs whose day is past ; each is a symptom of religious decay."

Which means that the people in the pews are no longer content with what they hear from the pulpit ; whilst in the literature of the day, both classical and ephemeral, the religious conceptions which they have been accustomed to regard as certainties beyond question, are loftily dismissed as mere " cunningly devised fables." The ordinary inertia of religious convention will doubtless avail to prevent anything like panic, but the late Dr. Forsyth said most truly that—

" There is no more difficult position to-day, nor one which evokes less sympathy, than that of the minister who has to stand between the world of modern knowledge on the one hand, and the world of traditional religion on the other, and mediate between them."

Two things are quite certain ; namely, first, that modern knowledge, both scientific and critical, has not only come to stay, but to increase in extent and influence. Then, also, history will repeat itself in the vehement and stubborn resistance which " orthodox " religion, especially that type which now bears the name of Fundamentalism, will for a long time maintain. When a careful writer like Dr. Maltby, the present President of the Wesleyan Conference, openly declares that—

" The Church is at present without a doctrine of the Cross ; it is without a doctrine of the Hereafter ; it has only a wavering and indefinite doctrine of moral recovery ; and only a dim and ghostly Christian ethic,"

the delicacy and difficulty of the Christian teacher's task in the midst of such times of transition, is too obvious to need comment.

(x) But the whole truth is not yet told. Christian Churches as a whole, and Christian ministers on the average, say little or nothing about the quantity and quality of the downright opposition to everything Christian which not

only still exists, but in some respects is increasing with every generation. A mere hint of the situation was given above in the Introduction, but much more might and indeed must be said, if the truth is to be told, concerning the nature and extent of the anti-Christian propaganda which is always going on throughout the land, and especially in all the large city centres. The change from the raucous campaigns of Messrs. Bradlaugh and Holyoake during the last century, to the clever, implacable, persistent, insidious methods of the "Rationalist Press Association," is interpreted by not a few Christian writers and speakers to mean that disbelief is dying out. A greater mistake could not be made. It is simply impossible that thousands of men and women in these realms should listen, week by week, to most clever and specious attacks upon all Christian truths—to which no reply ever appears—without being either shaken in their former faith, or confirmed in their unbelief. Probably even more influential is the "Rationalist" employment of the Press. Thousands of cheap but clever books and booklets are being circulated in these realms. The latest boast of the Rationalist Press Association is that "over four millions of famous cheap reprints have been sold," embracing all the onslaughts upon everything Christian by such writers as Huxley, Haeckel, Clodd, Grant Allen, J. M'Cabe, J. S. Mill, W. R. Greg, Samuel Laing, and others. Besides which, literally tons of virulent anti-Christian literature are dispatched to foreign lands. So that one of the most real and increasing tasks of Christian Foreign Missionaries, is to combat the difficulties exported from this country. In our own midst it is not mere ignorance, or indifference, or pleasure-seeking, which causes nine-tenths of the adult population to keep aloof from the churches. A recent reply of a shrewd business man to a preacher who³ was lamenting the absence of so many from public worship in his church, was but too well founded

and typical: "They do not believe what you say, that is why they don't come." Blunt, but true.¹

(xi) It is small wonder, in face of all the facts, that there should be a lamentation in well-informed quarters over the lack of authority in religion, as well as in social and other realms of modern life. All the facts and influences adverted to above are compelling men—and women—to think for themselves as never before. It is not merely that the *ipse dixit* of the pulpit has ceased to command attention. The combination of increased knowledge with enlarged liberty, has created a new mental atmosphere. The rights and powers of democracy are everywhere increasingly maintained. As in politics any speaker is liable to be howled down if he does not please his audience, so even in matters ecclesiastical, the dignitaries of the Church who used to command, are now only able to suggest, and even that sometimes with bated breath. It is very significant that under these circumstances, a very high-placed authority in the Anglican Church should have recently made such an open avowal as follows over:

¹ If any further illustration of what is here summarized were necessary or desirable it might well be supplied from a small volume which has just come—gratis—by post, whilst these words are being written. The author, Mr. C. R. B. Freeman, published some little time ago an anti-Christian novel entitled *By Thor, No!* He now issues a definite virulent attack upon Christianity—entitled *Towards the Answer*—pronouncing it much inferior to Islam, and indeed denouncing it *in toto*. He is content to adopt the gibe of Disraeli that "half the white people worshipped a Jew, and the other half, a Jewess." But its keen diatribes derive all their force from assuming that Fundamentalism is the only true representative of Christianity. Its not very modest claim to "give a straightforward" account of the problem of the Universe from the "rationalist" standpoint, contains nothing new, but as a clever summary of what is scattered through the four millions of cheap reprints mentioned above, it certainly serves as confirmation, if such were needed, of what has been represented in section (x) above.

"The clerical profession has fallen on evil days. The majority of the clergy themselves seem to have made up their minds that the crisis can be met only by following concurrently two lines of policy. On the one hand, they must magnify the sacerdotal theory of their office. They must try to convince the laity that they are the sole dispensers of spiritual graces, holding in this respect a privileged position as compared with other religious bodies. This has, of course, always been the Roman policy. The Roman Church claims an authoritative monopoly in the dispensation of Divine favours. It has been the most lucrative monopoly in history. The objection to this policy is that when the masses have received a sound secular education, they will no longer believe it."

But it may be truly said, in Mr. Meiklejohn's words, that in spite of the desperate efforts of the English Church Union and the *Church Times*, supporting the dogged dogmatism of Rome—

"The sacerdos is becoming a fast-diminishing species. He is not adaptable to the modern environment, and soon, in mentally progressive countries, he will be as extinct as the dodo. The Reformation swept away the old conception of a magical, mediatorial priesthood, and abolished the exaggerated sacerdotalism which owed its existence to an unreal sacramentalism."

The truth of this estimate is manifest in the growing irreligion of the Continent and America. Even in these more religiously conservative islands it becomes ever plainer that clerical authority is a vanished quantity, and there is nothing to take its place. When to this is added, as indeed must be done for truth's sake, the loss of the old authoritative note in—"the Bible says"—as final for all doubts or queries, the measureless difficulties which must arise for Christian Churches and Christian teachers, both intellectually and ethically, are as manifest as serious.

(xii) There is yet another very modern element, the most recent of the wonders of this wonderful century, which cannot but have a very real and far-reaching effect upon all human relations, including Christian Churches and their work. The marvels of "wireless" broadcasting are

indeed as yet in their infancy. But they are significant enough already, to make an unmistakable difference in the religious as well as social atmosphere. Whether it will be boon or bane for truly Christian purposes, remains to be seen.¹ No one will question, or wish to lessen, the comfort which may thus come to bedridden invalids and the sufferers in our hospitals. But it is a somewhat doubtful gain for Christian faith, to have a few moments only, out of a long secular programme on Sunday evenings, occupied with very uncertain or elementary religious addresses. It is, for thousands, a tempting but meagre substitute for the Sunday evening service where all the hallowing influences of worship are blended—or, at all

¹ The unsettling if not religiously destructive influence of some wireless broadcastings, may well be illustrated by the publication of the "talks" recently delivered by Professor Julian Huxley under the title of *The Stream of Life*. The unhesitating adoption of the principle of Evolution as a scientific doctrine will only trouble those Fundamentalists who blindly cling to bygone theological cosmogonies. But the agnostic extent to which the Professor carries his principle, is another matter. It becomes indeed nothing less than the utilization of B.B.C. opportunities to diffuse "Rationalist" anti-Christian views—which is hardly fair, seeing that no reply is possible. Thus in regard to the problems of biology, he is content to affirm, without hesitation or qualification, that—"There is no trace of conscious design. The whole process is as superbly inevitable as the motions of the planets. Out of the blind and often cruel forces of nature has come progress. It is true in Matthew Arnold's words, though perhaps not quite in the sense which he intended, that there exists a Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, and that power is the sum of the forces of Nature, which have pushed life slowly and painfully onwards toward the righteousness of progress—of more life, more power, more mind." And all this "progress onwards" the blind result of purely chance variations! Some of us who have neither the prestige nor the broadcasting opportunities of a "Professor," but have given possibly as much attention to science as he has, would certainly have something to say about this really self-contradictory deliverance. But it is only one tributary to the stream of modern anti-Christian influences.

events, may be—with real Christian enlightenment and inspiration. But in any case the “wireless,” with all its wires, has come to stay. Or rather, like its fellow-marvel, aviation, not only to stay but to grow from more to more, beyond the vista of all our present expectations.

These twelve items in the changing modern environment are by no means an exhaustive list. But they will serve as pointers to that new world of life and thought in which Christianity has either to grow or to die, during the coming years. When all that is thus connoted is fairly considered, one may well be forgiven for asking, in view of all the perversions which still seem to thrive, and all the inertia, mental, spiritual, and practical, of average Christian Churches, what hope is there of “mending” Christianity as the times and the truth demand? The only certainty appears to be that no one man, no single Church, no drastic change, no mighty “revival,” will suffice. No sudden emotional upheaval will avail to weld into one actually spiritual and truly “Catholic” Church, all the approximations to Christ’s ideal which now constitute Christendom.

Volcanic eruptions do not ripen crops, or cover orchard trees with fruit. Most assuredly, in spite of all types of Millenarianism, is there neither promise nor hope that some celestial cataclysm will come to transform all Christian failures into triumphs, and all human devils into saints. No such short-cut to the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, is even thinkable. There is but one royal road, and that is the same for every age; as it has been ever since the Apostle wrote his letter to the Romans, and ever will be, until time is no more—“To them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.” It is the *patience in well-doing* which constitutes at once the greatest difficulty and the only hope.

To describe all the ways in which this need for patient devotion finds scope, would be a quixotic undertaking. The following items are but the more pressing and important themes which must be reconsidered, and restated, if in the days that are before us, Christianity is to fulfil the inexorable law of all life in adapting itself to its inevitable environment.

3. TRUTH

It seems somewhat strange, confessedly, to suggest that one of the principal needs, even if not the greatest, of Christianity in its adaptation to the modern environment, should be the regard for truth. But it is only too well warranted. It may be best here to show by reference to other avowals, that this is not a mere personal opinion. A little time since a "Methodist Theological Research Association" was formed in Bradford by a number of "laymen," because they believed that "the Methodist Churches generally, continue to teach many things believed by our fathers, but now known to be contrary to established fact." What real grounds are there for any such suggestion? And how far does it apply also to the other sections of British Christianity to-day? These are queries which neither ought to be, nor can be, evaded. Professor A. S. Pringle Pattison recently told the Theological Society of New College, Edinburgh, that there was a "great multitude outside the Churches, sympathetic to Christian ideals, but alienated from official Christianity by the incredibilities which are mingled with its teachings." He declared that "the masses, educated and uneducated, have drifted away from the Churches altogether, many of them especially among the intelligent artisan class avowedly agnostic, or goaded into a contemptuous hostility by the outworn dogmas and 'plans of salvation' which are still thrust upon them in the name of Christianity." If Professor

Pattison is regarded as an extreme critic, we have similar utterances from others who are well known within the Churches. Thus Dr. George Jackson of Didsbury, writes in the *Manchester Guardian* that :

“ There is a widespread suspicion that we ministers are the victims of intellectual timidity, that we cling to ancient formulæ long after they have lost their meaning for us ; that even when we have gained new knowledge for ourselves, we are shy of declaring it to our people, that in a word we do not care for truth as truth ought always to be cared for. Many will resent the suspicion, but it is there, and until we have not only scotched but slain it, we shall never win the mind of our generation. If there is one thing which science has taught men to-day it is the sacredness of fact.”

Whilst Canon Streeter openly confesses :

“ I may have been unfortunate, but it is certainly the fact that I have never heard a single sermon devoted to emphasizing the important fact that the love of truth is a fundamental element in the love of God. Thus no scholar now holds the old doctrine of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures—but there has been something very like a conspiracy of silence on the subject, within the Churches.”

But there has been, and alas there still is, more than “ a conspiracy of silence ” in regard to what we now know to be true. In very many Churches, if not in the great majority, there is a strong determination to suppress the truth. Dean Inge, speaking for the Anglican Church, said not long since to the British Association :

“ After four hundred years the Church has failed to adapt her cosmology to the discoveries of Galileo. Officially, we clergy have to live in a pre-Copernican universe, otherwise certain dogmas on which the Church exists would have no meaning. The battle against the dead hand of authority is not yet won, but the issue is certain. The educated Christian has to fit his creed within the framework of the universe as we know it to be.”

Both within Parish Churches and Free Churches throughout the land, real attempts to be openly true to what we

now know, are conspicuous by their absence. This applies only too plainly and too often, to all the three main elements of the public worship which the people are pressed to attend. In the majority of cases the "lessons" read from the Bible, the hymns employed in the service, and the sermons delivered, proceed upon the assumption that no change worth mentioning has taken place in Christian doctrines during the last hundred years. Let us take one or two instances as typical of much more.

Outside the churches, the Bible is scarcely read at all to-day. As Dr. Peake said, a dozen years ago—"The Bible has irretrievably lost the place once accorded to it by the consent of Christendom, and this is coming to be realized by an increasing number." The teaching in schools is purely elementary, and has little to do with Christian doctrine. It must also be acknowledged, for it is true, that even within the pale of the Churches, very little thoughtful Bible-reading is done. Consequently, the great majority even of those who attend public worship are dependent for their conceptions of Christianity and its significance, upon what they hear read in public from the Bible as "lessons," together with the following sermons. As to the former. In nine cases out of ten the reading is taken from the Version of 1611; generally badly, that is mechanically, read; without note or comment; no notice whatever being taken of the "hundreds of mistakes," to quote the late Dr. Driver; the Old Testament is put upon exactly the same level as the New, in regard to Christian ideals and obligations.¹ What follows from this procedure in almost all the churches, week by week, through all the year? Just that which Dr. Peake—a gentle, mellow scholar, not given to pessimism—said "appalled" him,

¹ For many instances of such faulty reading, I must be content to refer to my volume on *Reality in Bible Reading*, published by T. & T. Clark.

namely, "the general ignorance as to what Christianity really is, and means." The sneering cartoons which form the climax of such "rationalist" diatribes as that of Mr. Freeman mentioned above, find here their seeming justification. "These are the things," they say, "which are read publicly in churches, and preached in sermons." The allegation is only too true. Thus the opening chapters of Genesis are read and referred to as exact history and science; whilst corresponding hymns are sung, containing statements which every thoughtful member of the congregation, younger as well as older, knows are not true. Such, for instance, as this :

"The universal Lord,
By whose almighty word
Creation rose in form complete."

Whilst Mr. Gladstone's favourite hymn, "Praise to the holiest in the height," refers to "Adam" and the "Fall" with all the simplicity of a schoolboy, and is approvingly sung by thousands.

When the sermon comes, if any reference whatever is made to what has been read, it will certainly not be an acknowledgement that evolution and anthropology have compelled us to view these old legends in a different light. We know, as surely as we know that the sun does not go round the earth, that there never was a literal "Adam and Eve," as "the first man and woman," with all the detail of Genesis iii. We know that the "Fall" was not, literally and precisely, the eating of a fruit which brought death into the world, and cursed all human beings with original sin and total depravity. But in spite of this knowledge, which becomes more sure and clear every year—whatever the fanatic protests of Fundamentalism—sermons and readings and hymns go on, in which that knowledge is entirely ignored, and continual opportunity is given for

anti-Christian sneers; whilst all the older children note that what they hear at church on Sunday, is flatly contradicted at school on Monday. But when, frankly and to ordinary congregations, who most need the truth, do preachers speak as plainly as Dr. Garvie has done in his excellent little book entitled *The Evangelical Type of Christianity?* ¹

“The story of the Fall in Genesis iii., is now generally admitted as not literal history. The theories of original sin and total depravity cannot be defended to-day, and need not be defended, as they are not the foundation on which the evangelical representation of the Christian message needs to be built, for we have a very much broader and firmer basis of knowledge of man, individually and collectively, on which we can rest our present argument.

“Evangelicalism has been entirely misled by a dogmatic and not a moral or religious interest, when it has assumed that the plan of salvation rested, and must rest, on the story of the Fall, or the doctrines of original sin and total depravity based upon it. Christ never in His teaching alludes to that story.

“It is unfortunate that the Gospel has been so often identified with views about the Bible, and consequently views about man and God, sin and salvation, which seem to have the support of the teaching of the Bible, but which the progress of human knowledge has superseded.”

The fact which has to be faced is, that not only is such expression of the truth in almost all Churches—Romish, Anglican, and Free alike—suppressed by a “conspiracy of silence,” but it is opposed and denounced by many Christian teachers who ought to know better; and by hosts of sincere but uninstructed believers who follow them. Weekly and monthly journals are published, representing a large total constituency in which, under the guise of a superior spirituality and deeper reverence for “the Word of God,” all modern knowledge is scorned, and its application to

¹ Epworth Press, 1s. 6d. A small book which ought to be known and studied by all preachers and teachers calling themselves evangelical.

Christianity pronounced the work of the devil. Whole pages might here be occupied with examples of this attitude which would emphatically endorse Professor Pattison's lament, and confirm the words of the Bishop of Aberdeen, quoted above. Take but this specimen from one of the journals referred to :

" Can any reader imagine such a hotch-potch belief as that being held by a bishop of the Christian Church, and accepted by other ministers and preachers of the Gospel. And yet it is the only logical outcome of acceptance of the unproved guess of Evolution. If the story of the Creation and Fall in Genesis is not true, and Evolution *is*, and what we call sin is the inherited tendency we receive from the beasts (poor libelled beasts, innocent of many of the depraved acts of many of their supposed descendants), their God must be the creator of it, and the astounding thing is that believers in the theory should accept any idea of atonement.

" I turn with disgust from these fanciful ideas and find a logical definition in the much-abused Bible account of the Fall of Man through the temptation of God's enemy and ours, and then I can understand the devilishness that is round about me and which I have to fight as an evangelist."

Let us turn for a moment to the New Testament and its teaching. Most pulpits are still supplied with the " Authorized " Version, in spite of its many undeniable and important errors. Not seldom preachers say that they prefer its " rhythmical English." As if people are invited to worship so that they may be literary connoisseurs—truth is nothing, sound everything. Quite recently a thoughtful man went to all the leading bookshops in this city of Sheffield, to purchase a copy of the Revised New Testament. He could not find one; and was told that the Revised Version did not sell, so it was not " stocked." Such is the popular ignorance which is bred upon the methods to which the Bishop of Aberdeen referred. Is it any wonder that the better understanding of the New Testament lags behind ?

Whence it naturally follows that the former untrue and repellent representations of the "Atonement" still obtain, and the deep, tender, moving significance of the Cross of Christ, is turned into a cruel slander upon the love of God. Well does Dr. Garvie say that—

"The view held at the Reformation, and in evangelicalism since, that God imposed on Christ the penalty of sin, and that His death was a penal substitution for ours, cannot now satisfy us. It offends our moral sense—we cannot say that He was held guilty, or punished by God instead of us."

But the hymn-books keep on saying it, and no one objects. The preachers give out the words, and the people sing them.

"For every sinful action
Thou hast atonement made;
The perfect satisfaction
Thy precious blood has paid."

"For what you have done,
His blood must atone,
The Father hath stricken for you His dear Son.
The Lord in the day
Of His anger did lay
Your sins on the Lamb, and He bore them away.

He purchased the grace
Which now I embrace.
O Father, Thou knowst He hath died in my place."

So, too, in spite of the plain teaching of the New Testament and its best, that is truest and fairest interpreters, concerning the universal Fatherhood of God as revealed by Jesus Christ,¹ the contrary is still loudly and persistently maintained on both sides of the Atlantic. Mr. Spurgeon

¹ For a full statement of this, including the customary reference to John viii., and other passages, see my booklet, *Father of All*, published by the Epworth Press, in which the whole case is stated.

has vast numbers of admirers who accept all his teaching. As thus, in his own words :

“ I believe in predestination without any cutting or trimming. The doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God is a lie. This is evident from this one passage—John viii. 38. The prayer beginning, ‘ Our Father which art in heaven,’ was never meant to be used by everybody ; in the mouth of the ungodly, it is altogether out of place. The axe must be laid to the root of that deadly upas tree of universal Fatherhood.”

From America still come similar deliverances. Said the late Dr. Len Broughton, who was “ in great demand for week-day services in this country ” :

“ God is only the Father of that part of the race that have been adopted into His family. I do not know of a more damnable doctrine than that doctrine which is so popular in some great pulpits of the land to-day, known as the Fatherhood of God.”

Whilst a well-known Wesleyan minister is still going about declaring, as reported in the Press, that—

“ He knew of nothing preached as Christianity to-day that was working more irreparable ruin, than the teaching that there was such a thing as the universal Fatherhood of God, and universal brotherhood of man. There was no such thing in any spiritual sense.”

He is by no means alone in Methodism in such declaration. Whilst the latest from America, only a few weeks since, is the characteristic message of the “ revivalist ” known as “ Billy Sunday.” Not content with cursing the Churches which refused to co-operate with his “ mission,” he declares that—“ The universal Fatherhood of God is an infernal lie.” Is it any wonder that the famous “ man in the street,” to say nothing of his better educated fellow-citizen, should stand aloof from all the Churches, until they cease thus to contradict one another ?

Again ; very few public utterances have been as often quoted as Sir Oliver Lodge’s remark, a short time since,

that "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins, still less about their punishment." It has been trenchantly asked wherein the "higher" element consists, if a man has no keener sense of moral failure than a dog. But there is yet another question to be faced, namely, what are the people to understand when the Christian preacher bids them repent of their sins? What sins? they may well ask. For what is the Christian doctrine of sin? To quote John's word, "Sin is the transgression of the law," only raises another query—What law? For even yet, the answer of the average preacher, and the conception of the average congregation, is—The law of Moses. So the Ten Commandments are written up in golden letters in Christian Churches, and outside placards are posted warning the passer-by against "breaking the Sabbath." Yet he knows well that no man attending any Christian Church keeps the "Sabbath," as it is found in Exodus xx.—or ever intends so to keep it. Meanwhile, the real "sinfulness of sin," as Jesus portrayed it, namely, the breaking in heart and life of His "two great commands," is either left without emphasis, or "more honoured in the breach than in the observance."

So is unreality not only condoned but consecrated. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—"as truth is in Jesus"—is not forthcoming; and for want of it, the average worshipper is confused and does not know what he believes, whilst the outsider is confirmed in his aloofness from the Churches and his general indifference to religion.

No apology is here offered for the assumption that, extremists apart, the general representation of Christianity by Modernism is true; and that of Fundamentalism is not true. The analogy with the state of things which called forth Paul's estimate in Rom. x. 2, is accurate and fair. The Jews to whom the Apostle referred were the Funda-

mentalists of that day, and to them Paul was a wicked Modernist. So irrational, ever, is religious conservatism. To-day, alas, there is a double irony in the modern situation. The Romish Church, which does certainly speak with no uncertain sound, and teach with definite, unmistakable, ceaseless emphasis, is spending itself in perpetuating what, as long as the New Testament lasts, is demonstrably untrue. Whilst the freer Protestant Churches, which maintain all the privileges and responsibilities of opportunity to learn, yet in numberless cases refuse to learn, and deal with those who—with full Christian warrant—strive to teach them the truth, as the Jews of Thessalonica did with Paul. The “nobility” of the Bereans is a rare occurrence. The situation is only too truly described by a cultured Anglican Rector.¹

“ Since the days of the Councils, or of the Reformation, modern science, philosophy, scholarship, comparative religion, psychology, have given us a new and far deeper and truer knowledge of nature, of the Bible, of God and man, and have effected a stupendous revolution in our ideas and outlook. Yet here we are as a Church still clinging to ideas and creeds and dogmas of the fourth and sixteenth centuries, which we have quite outgrown. But dare to call in question these obsolete Church shibboleths, and you will be labelled a perjured man and a traitor. But just imagine a judge or doctor tied down in his practice to-day, to what was thought and done in his profession in the first, fourth, or sixteenth century, forbidden to make the slightest alteration to meet new light or new needs, on pain of expulsion from his profession. Adaptability to new environment is the law of life, and any institution that tries to remain stationary in a moving world is doomed. And are we to believe that the Holy Spirit has abdicated since the first, fourth, or sixteenth centuries, and is no longer here to guide into all truth ? ”

Thus in regard to sin and its consequences, which are certainly fundamental Christian matters, is it first, or fourth, or sixteenth, or twentieth century truth, which is taught

¹ The Rev. J. R. Cohu of Aston Clinton, author of many valuable books on religion and science.

in the churches to-day ? It is not a question of what a growing number of better educated clergy or ministers themselves believe, but rather what do they teach ? They know, from modern science and closer Biblical study, that man was not suddenly created some 6000 years ago, in the persons of Adam and Eve, and that human depravity has nothing to do with any Garden of Eden. But do they so preach and teach ? Do they, dare they, put the truth, say, as frankly as Sir Oliver Lodge in his elementary but truthful "catechism" ?

"*What are you ?* (Ans.) I am a being alive and conscious upon this earth, a descendant of ancestors who rose by gradual processes from lower forms of animal life, and with struggle and suffering became man.

"*What, then, may be meant by the Fall of man ?* (Ans.) At a certain stage of development man became conscious of a difference between right and wrong, so that thereafter, when his conduct fell below a normal standard of conduct, he felt ashamed and sinful, and entered upon a long period of human effort and failure ; nevertheless, the consciousness of degradation marked a rise in the scale of existence."

That is the simple truth. But in numberless churches, and by numberless teachers, it is still being vehemently taught that, to quote verbatim, "we deserved eternal death," because of what "our first parents" did in a literal garden ages ago, through which the whole human race was doomed to eternal punishment. From this they can only be saved by believing that Jesus was made to "suffer death upon the cross as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." And this is declared to be "the Gospel," not only by devoted bands of "Salvationists" in the streets, and Mission Halls, but in very many if not most of the "evangelical" churches throughout the land.

Concerning all this, there is but one question which the modern man will ask, and to which he demands answer.

Is it true? And there is but one answer—No; it is not true. What is the truth is not here attempted.¹ It is a great question, in answer to which, happily, there are many able contributors. The point here is, that in all these respects, and some others, the Christianity which is to survive, let alone develop, and win the myriads at present out of touch with all the Churches, will have to adapt itself to the environment, by believing, preaching, acting upon, not what our fathers so sincerely believed, but what we, their better instructed children, now know to be true. That will be the only “Apostolical succession” worth thinking about, even the endorsement of Paul’s clear strong word—“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true.” And that is but the echo of Christ’s own assurance—“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

4. A REAL GOSPEL

No words in the New Testament are more familiar than those of the angel that appeared to the shepherds :

“Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people.”

And they were unequivocally echoed by William Tyndale in the Prologue to his revision of the New Testament in 1535, thus :

“The Euangelion—that we call the Gospel—is a great word, and signifieth good, merry, glad, and joyful tidings, that maketh a man’s heart glad, and maketh him sing, dance, and leap for joy.”

¹ Though I may be permitted to add that in other works I have sought to contribute my mite to positive Christianity, and must be content to refer to such volumes as *Christian Essentials*, *Christian Reality in Modern Light*, the Fernley Lecture for 1916, *Does it Matter what a Man Believes? Christian Findings after Fifty Years* (Epworth Press).

But in the light of what is generally termed Evangelicalism, as outlined above, and still represented nearly everywhere, it is difficult to see where the real Gospel comes in; and certainly increasing numbers of men and women in our midst to-day, are failing to find it. The recent fashion of issuing religious "questionnaires" in the daily press, is doubtless a mere device with a view to circulation; but the responses have been significant enough. Here is one, truly typical of very many:

"I am now eighty-two years of age and have been engaged in Church work the greater part of my life, but in the last few years I have become convinced that the Christian Church, with its confusing sectarianism, is powerless to guide and keep the nations in peace and goodwill to men."

Another correspondent pathetically describes his endeavour to preserve

"A definite religious outlook on life possible to those who also hold the scientific point of view; this outlook being embodied in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, considered quite apart from what are manifestly the excrescences upon that life and teaching which seem to form the fundamentals of most of the so-called Christian Churches."

It cannot be altogether matter for astonishment that the vast majority of the people in this country—to say nothing now of the Continent—are out of touch with the churches, and ignore what is so commonly called the Gospel. They fail to see what "joyful news" there is in promising them deliverance from eternal punishment which they scornfully dismiss from their thoughts, as being incredible in itself and based upon a sinfulness which they utterly repudiate. What can the Christianity of the future offer them to justify the claim to be a veritable Gospel—"glad tidings of great joy"?

Undoubtedly, the first and most difficult step is to acknowledge the mistakes of the past. In spite of all the

protests on behalf of truth, from F. W. Robertson to this hour, popular theology still rests upon doctrines which Jesus never taught, and foundations which science has shown to be untrue. But the men and women and children of to-day are being compelled to think as never before, and they have come to know that what they so commonly hear, is not true. Therefore they turn from it. What, then, is there which is at once so true and yet depressing, that deliverance from it can rightly be proclaimed as glad tidings? The message of Jesus was unmistakably—"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It is for Christianity to show how real a Gospel that appeal implies. In very deed, when justice is done to it, the reality of the good tidings does emerge as surely, and indeed gloriously, as the beams of the rising sun over the hills disperse the shadows of the valley.

The three great evils which darken and depress mankind are, beyond all question, sin, and sorrow, and fear. Deliverance from these would be "salvation" indeed. There is neither need nor room to insist upon theological terms. "Sin" is quite a sufficient and intelligible word to express and include the double wrong which it connotes. Assuming here, with good reason, Christ's revelation of the character and purpose of God, the first great wrong is the scornful ignoring of the well-warranted "first Great Command"—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." This leads on to that contempt for the second—"Thou shalt love thy fellow-man as thyself"—which is the cause of all the unnecessary suffering under which humanity groans. But there is also a burden of sorrow, arising from the presence of inexplicable pain, and the inevitable conflicts of daily life, within and without. To this must be added the element of fear, which comes to a super-animal creature such as man, with his power to forecast the future, and above all to wonder and dread what death may bring.

There has always been and still is unmeasured craving for some one, or something, which should "deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

In regard to these three—sin, sorrow, and fear,—it may be said without hesitation that humanity has more need to-day of salvation, than ever before. And such salvation, deliverance from these three plagues or curses of mankind, is precisely what the appeal of Jesus means. The "Kingdom of Heaven" is the realm whence these are banished. "Thy Kingdom come" means "Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven." That prayer, translated into fact, would be such a salvation as this poor world has never yet known. To proclaim its possibility is indeed glad tidings, a veritable Gospel. It is no less true for being a platitude; for it is verily a Gospel of love. "We must start," as Dr. Garvie rightly says, "from the revelation of the Fatherhood of God in Christ." That is, the universal Fatherhood, without respect to age, or place, or creed, or Church. Charles Wesley's prayer, is an unlimited human cry :

"Father of all, in whom alone
We live and move and breathe,
One bright celestial ray dart down
And cheer Thy sons beneath."

The Alpha and Omega of the Gospel of Jesus is, in His own word—"The Father Himself loves you." His mission is to bring love on earth from God to men; from men, through God, to each other. Now it is not a mere vapid generality, nor a pious platitude, nor a sentimental delusion, but the simple, actual, tragic fact, that the world's greatest curse to-day, is, in all its forms and degrees, the absence of love. It is true that we have learned the falsity of Tennyson's over-quoted lines, to the effect that "nature, red in tooth and claw with ravine," shrieks against the creed that

God is love. For Evolution, in spite of all its critics, has taught us differently. The upward development of humanity has been far from a mere fight for existence. The whole case is well summarized by Professors Thomson and Geddes :

“ The ideal of evolution is thus no gladiator’s show, but an Eden ; and though competition can never be wholly eliminated—the line of progress is thus no straight line, but at most an asymptote—it is much for our pure, natural history to see no longer struggle, but love, as creation’s final law.”¹

So that there is no warrant for the Agnostic attempt to strangle the doctrine of Jesus in the birth. But, manifestly, the development of love through the zigzag methods of evolution, has been too slow to avert the sin and sorrow and fear of humanity. There was, and still is, tragic need of something to accelerate the pace of the higher elements as against the lower. That something is *the Father’s love*. In the very nature of the case it could no more be made plain at once to humanity’s earliest stages, than any earthly father or mother can suddenly reveal their love to the new-born babe. But for all who have learned to read the Bible aright—as distinct from Bibliolatry—the progressive revelation of the divine nature in Jewish history, is manifest enough to justify the Apostle’s summary —“ The law has been our trainer to prepare us for Christ.” In the Old Testament, as in evolution, the progression has been through law to love. Dr. Garvie is well warranted in his statement that—

“ If Evangelicalism has ever suggested the idea of an angry, offended, and vengeful God, we may entirely condemn such a caricature of the Gospel.”²

Alas, such not only has been suggested, but still is, in some quarters, maintained as “ orthodox ” doctrine.

¹ *Evolution*, Home University Library, p. 247.

² *The Evangelical Type of Christianity*, p. 76.

Indeed not a few good men, in pulpits and in print, seem yet to be afraid of the unmistakable avowals of Jesus. They deem it always necessary, even when saying that God is love, to add some half-threatening reminder that God is "also just." As if real love could ever be anything else than just! When Jesus declared that the Kingdom of Heaven was "at hand," He certainly meant all and more than all that His devoted follower afterwards wrote to the Corinthians, in what we call the "Psalm of Love." His real message, therefore, and the good tidings of His Gospel may, for modern ears which have been surfeited with theological definitions, be truly expressed—here, of course, only in summary—under these four considerations :

(i) "Repent"—because the source of all the world's misery is found in the double scorn which constitutes the essence of "sin." It begins, as Dr. Garvie says :

"The most serious aspect of sin is not any penalty, natural or social, that it may now bring, or any fear of future judgment that it may awaken ; but its guilt as altering the relation of man to God, as substituting estrangement for fellowship, separation for union."

That is to say, the declaration of Jesus that God is a loving Father, the assurance that God is love, is so true, in science and in fact, as well as in Christian creed, that the only hope of deliverance from the lovelessness which curses the world of mankind, is to return to God.

(ii) The possibility of ending earth's miseries is thus "at hand." For it consists in believing, and acting upon, this assurance of Jesus, and so transforming the hells of daily life, national strife, and international jealousies, into the heaven where only the Father's will is done, and His children live the life of the family instead of that of the jungle.

(iii) For such return to His love, the Father waits. He can but wait ; for love cannot be compelled. His forgiveness, sympathy, gracious help, all wait—they can do no

more—for that free reciprocation of which human nature is capable. Here is the possibility, the actuality, of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." Assuredly. But the law of Christ; not the laws of Moses. The law of Christ is the law of love. Its transgression is the scorn of love—the scorn of the Father's love, bringing in its dire trail the scorn of His children, our fellow-men.

But (iv) the reciprocation of the divine appealing love brings what Jesus called "eternal life"; which is as distinct from mere everlasting existence, as is the breadth and depth of an ocean from an infinitely prolonged straight line. Rather is it the life of loving fellowship with God, for which there are no words, here and now; together with such highest human fellowships, unmarred by hate or pride, as science alone does not, cannot make, nor philosophy create, nor poetry describe as other than Utopia. But all this, and far more, is potential in the too easily uttered platitude of Christian parlance, that—"God is love."

In order that we may yet see a little more of the reality of so real a Gospel, let us look more closely into the consequences of this most tremendous of all possible human assertions. If it be true that "*God is love*," what follows? At the very least, and above all else, the Gospel of Christ is and ever must be a message of hope. It is summed up unmistakably in the Apostle's prayer for the Romans:

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Whatever is contrary to that, is unchristian, and forms no part of the Gospel of Jesus. The "Kingdom of Heaven" is the realm of hope. But into that realm men cannot be driven by any threats of punishment; they can only be invited. The force of the invitation depends upon the representation of God's nature and character. Truly, indeed, did the Archbishop of Canterbury say, recently,

that "the greatest need of this age is a better conception of God." The Augustinian-Calvinistic representation which so long held sway, with its doctrines of election and predestination, was false from the beginning, although its grip upon Christendom has only during recent years been really unloosed. But assuredly this age will have none of it. If only the Churches had the courage of the convictions which have been forced upon them! But there is yet too much room for the protest of the modern churchman,¹ quoted above, that

"We are as a Church still clinging to ideas and creeds and dogmas of the fourth and sixteenth centuries, which we have quite outgrown."

It is indeed difficult to say what representation of God is being presented to this age by Christian Churches, for they differ so much. The unequivocal teaching of Jesus is confused amidst a chorus of Shibboleths, so that Dr. W. R. Matthews has only too much reason for his protest:²

"No Christian can think without dismay of the position of the Church in this present age, or estimate without shame the degree in which the failure of the world to accept the leadership of Christ—and His revelation of God—is due to the failure of the community of Christians to present Him as He is. The brotherhood of the followers of the Way has become split up into antagonistic factions which bear no effective common witness, and by their internal relations do little to show the attractiveness of love."

It cannot be too emphatically stated that the Christian doctrine of the universal divine Fatherhood comes not from science, nor from philosophy, but from Jesus Christ alone. So that the true apprehension of His teaching, His person, His authority, is supremely called for. But even this is uncertain. Speaking for the Anglican Church, before the University of Cambridge, a serious indictment

¹ Rev. J. R. Cohu, Rector of Aston Clinton, see p. 134.

² *The Gospel and the Modern Mind*, p. 187.

was recently uttered by the Dean of Emmanuel College.¹
Said he :

“ The great characteristic of the religious movement of our time, is its return to the historic Jesus. His life as the perfect translation into terms of human speech of the life of God, enthralls and inspires the younger generation. But when they come to seek Him in the Churches, they find not Himself but a caricature. Hymns and stained glass, yes, and catechism and sacrament, but where in these is Jesus as the Gospels describe Him, as we are now learning to know Him ? In the catechism He hardly appears at all ; in the hymns and prayers He is either the Gentle Shepherd or the King of kings, never the Son of Man ; in the Eucharist He is the Christ of the Mass. ‘ They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him ’—that is the complaint of masses of modern disciples when they find, instead of the Master, the grave-clothes in which the piety of centuries has enswathed and concealed Him. Conventionalised even when not demonstrably falsified, tricked out with the symbols of human sentimentality, or the ornaments of human pomp, the heroic, suffering manhood of Jesus has disappeared, and left these relics in its place. We have failed to give this generation the one needful thing ; their very devotion is driving them elsewhere.”

In such an estimate there is only too much truth. But when the message of Jesus is cleared of these obscuring clouds, it shines forth unmistakable and unchangeable. His assurance that “ the Father Himself loves you,” is unique, amidst all the world’s religions. It is illustrated in His life, confirmed in His death, ratified in His resurrection. It is the unequivocal, unlimited, unchanging, sublime, and incomparable hall-mark of Christianity.

For consider what, if only it were truly and fully made known, such a message involves concerning both God and man. Concerning God, Bishop Barnes has well said that—

“ It is because the reasonableness of faith in God as the loving Father of men has decayed, that we get the revival of superstition. If, as I believe, such reasonable faith can be re-established by patient argument, the Church will be able to give to the nation the

¹ Rev. J. C. E. Raven, B.D., Editor of *The Challenge*.

spiritual inspiration which we shall sorely need in the troubled times that lie ahead. Belief in God's love can give us joy in God's service, if it be held with even a touch of Christ's splendid certainty. It can make us ever trustful, ever hopeful, ever patient."

The reasonableness of such an assurance is manifest, as soon as ever the real significance of love in the Fatherhood is grasped. For it must connote at least all these certainties, upon which those who preach the "Gospel" may dwell at length. (i) Whatever the ultimate and inexplicable mystery of personality may be, it is plain that nothing less than a person can love. So that the poet's words are not too often quoted concerning God, as Jesus represents Him :

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And spirit with spirit may meet."

(ii) Moreover, seeing that personalities may differ so widely in moral quality, there is the certainty that love, the love of a holy Father, must be the very best type of personality with which our own can hold communion. (iii) It is equally certain that however much the mystery of pain may baffle our understanding, love is the absolute guarantee of tender and utmost sympathy. (iv) As for the moral evil in human life which causes almost all the suffering, we know that not even love divine can by compulsion transform it into goodness. But (v) there is the ever-present certainty that love must and will sorrow over what it cannot prevent, and will be always doing all that love can do, to move a self-determined moral being. Even as Jesus expressed it—"My Father is working even until now, and I am working too." (vi) The very truth that "our God is a consuming fire," means that He is always doing all that power under love's direction can do, to destroy the evil which would otherwise destroy His children. (vii) So that upon all this the Apostolic assurance is well

based that the God of the Gospel of Jesus, is "the God of hope." For troubled humanity there can be no more real "glad tidings of great joy" than that.

But further, in regard to human nature. What follows, unmistakably and unequivocally—be variant theologies what they may—from the universal divine Fatherhood which Jesus declares? Again, at least these enheartening as well as sobering certainties. (i) The Psalmist's estimate¹—so long concealed from English readers by the Version of 1611—"Thou hast made man little less than divine, Thou hast crowned him with majesty and honour," finds its highest expression and surest guarantee. Science, indeed, confirms and amplifies the 139th Psalm in pronouncing man the noblest product of evolution; but the crown of humanity comes from the hand of Jesus, when he bids us pray to "our Father." Seeing that "there is no respect of persons with God," it follows that in the light of Christ's good tidings, the pauper in our human midst is really more royal than any king that men can make; and every human child is God's child as fully as any offspring of earth's princes, or dukes, or other "aristocracy." Such is the dignity which Christ's Christianity, alone of all the religions of the world, confers upon every human being. What this ought to mean in "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," with accompanying comfort and hope, it is for all true Christians and Christian Churches to make plain to humanity, by ever echoing their Master's word—"Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I, above all others,² will give you rest and hope." From this high estimate of humanity, much follows. (ii) Responsibility for moral conduct as a free being, to an exceptional degree—"Thou hast put all things under his feet—all sheep and oxen and the beasts of the field." Much more is rightly expected from a child than from a

¹ Psalm viii. 5.

² The pronoun in Greek is emphatic.

servant. Especially (iii) responsibility for the power to respond to the two "great commands." That is, to become saints by loving obedience, or sinners by wilful rejection. Hence arises (iv) the capability of making heaven or hell on earth; with (v) the assurance that the death which waits for our mortal bodies, is but the entry into another life which cannot but bring results according to just desert; but which will assuredly bring "glory, honour, and immortality, to all who are patient in well-doing"—whatever their creed, or status, or nationality.

When all that the above means and includes is appreciated, what more real, or great, or gracious "good tidings" could come to human hearts than such a Gospel? The only difficulty or hesitation about it can be the popular one, sometimes so raucously expressed, that it is "too good to be true"; even as Mr. Blatchford declared it to be "but the baseless shadow of a wistful human dream." But that objection has been so often, and one must say so fairly, met, that it can only be repeated by those for whom reasoning is vain. The mystery of pain is on all Christian hands acknowledged to be great and deep; in some cases beyond all present explaining. But in regard to these, Christian faith can well afford to wait with patience for the revelations of the "other side." When we are told that innocent pain is the "crux of Christian Theism," I venture here to repeat what I have elsewhere said, because its truth and fairness remain unshaken. To all such questions—

"This in plain terms is the answer. If on rational principles faith is shaken by the mystery of pain, upon the very same principles it is restored, established, and made unshakably triumphant by the greater mystery of painlessness. If God is rightly credited with all that dark side of human existence which is not definitely due to moral evil, then, certainly in all honesty, He must also be regarded as the ultimate Source of all that bright and happy side of human being which is manifestly not man's own creation. When there-

after, these two estimates are fairly compared, it becomes plain beyond denial, that the bright side exceeds the dark, as truly and as much as the light and heat of the midday sun exceeds the cold illumination of the nightly moon.”¹

This consideration leaves us free, therefore, to appreciate all those other grounds upon which, as rational beings, we may accept the testimony of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. These have been so fairly and forcibly set forth elsewhere, that it only remains here to lay due stress upon one other feature of the case, namely, that of experience.

Half a century ago Professor William James demonstrated the reality of “varieties of religious experience.” But he landed in a nebulous “Pluralism” which, to say the least, is little calculated to yield an experience that would answer to Kant’s test of value. It is at once the truth and the glory of Christian experience—that is, the experience which follows upon accepting the glad tidings of Jesus, which Kingsley so significantly called “Good news of God” and acting upon it—that it does conform to the highest philosophical test, even in the lowliest personalities and amid the poorest as well as richest environments. For whilst its centre, as that of all experience, must be within—in the inmost soul where “the peace of God which transcends all our powers of thought and expression” dwells for him who has set to his seal that Jesus is true—that is but a beginning of a radiation which demonstrates reality to all around. Being far removed from mere sentimental pietism, its “love” answers to the practical Apostolic test.

“Owe no man anything, save to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. Love works no ill to his neighbour; love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.

“We love, because He first loved us.”

¹ For illustration by appeal to facts, of the principle here involved, see my little booklet under the title of *The Mystery of Painlessness* (Epworth Press).

This is no mere matter of doctrine ; it is embodied in facts innumerable already. But these would be still more manifest and impressive if only the experience within were what it might be, and truly ought to be. For then, first, every home would be what myriads of homes are, havens of happiness and peace, of comfort and inspiration. There is no heaven on earth like that of a truly Christian home. Moreover, even in these days in which it is becoming increasingly the fashion to criticize Christian Churches, the facts remain that in many real respects they are the " salt of the earth," and their destruction would simply mean the reduction of civilization to Bolshevism. To say nothing of the actuality of the philanthropic work of all kinds, by which they are now doing more in one week, in the relief of suffering and misery, than all " rationalism " has done in the whole course of the centuries. This applies especially to those great congested centres of population which we call cities, where all that really tends to mitigate evil and develop good, is but an expression of attempts to come ever nearer to the Apostolic ideal—" Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Nor is that all. For when we lament the apparent failure of political and social and municipal endeavours to bring about universal well-being, we not only know what would come to pass if men were but true to Christ's two great commands, but we have such convictions confirmed from the most unlikely quarters. Even Mr. Bernard Shaw, for all the boundless conceit of his cynical cartooning of Christ and Christianity—as in the Preface to his *Androcles and the Lion*—makes this acknowledgement :

" I am no more a Christian than Pilate was, or you, gentle reader ; and yet, like Pilate, I greatly prefer Jesus to Annas and Caiaphas ; and I am ready to admit that after contemplating the world, and human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will, if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman."

Whilst it is too manifest to need any argument, that the international problems of the future, with all the dark mutterings as to the possibility of yet another war more hellish than the last, will need for their solution something more than a League of Nations, or the pact of Locarno. Indeed, and in truth, what they will need is no less and no other than what was outlined by the six premiers of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Newfoundland, in their manifesto for the New Year of 1920. It is worth perpetuating by reason of its unshakable truthfulness :

“ Even the hope that lies before the world of a life of peace, protected and developed by a League of Nations, is itself dependent on something deeper and more fundamental still. The co-operation which the League of Nations explicitly exists to foster, will become operative in so far as the consenting peoples have the spirit of goodwill. And the spirit of goodwill among men rests on spiritual forces, the hope of a brotherhood of humanity reposes on the deeper spiritual fact of the Fatherhood of God. In the recognition of the fact of that Fatherhood, and of the Divine purpose for the world, which are central to the message of Christianity, we shall discover the ultimate foundation for the reconstruction of an ordered and harmonious life for all men. That recognition cannot be imposed by Government. It can only come as an act of free consent on the part of individual men and women everywhere.”

All that has happened since the four years of hell and horror, 1914-18, goes to confirm the deliberate judgement of these foremost politicians ; and all the virulent sarcasms of some well-known anti-Christian cynics no more avail to shake it, than the dashing of the ocean spray moves granite cliffs. To put in contrast with this sober and well-warranted judgement, the fallacious, cocksure, and offensive caricatures of Mr. Bernard Shaw in the work above mentioned, is to compare dignity, truth, and hope, with impudence, falsity, and despair. If Christian Churches had no more real Gospel for mankind than his cartoons

suggest, they would indeed deserve to perish. But whatever their faults, they are actually making too real a contribution to the welfare of humanity, to be affected by any number of such superficial gibes.

At the time of writing this, the literary world is somewhat excited over Mr. H. G. Wells' latest production entitled *The World of William Clissold*—who aspires to bring about a "new revolution" by means of a "minority of intelligent men and women." One would have thought that there have always been plenty of such, if that were all that is needed. But the discussion of such a suggestion is not here in place, save to point out that William Clissold's ideal is doubly inferior to the real Gospel which Christian Churches have it in their power to make known. For not only is this ideal far lower, when all is considered practically as well as spiritually, than Christ's "Kingdom of Heaven," but it lacks any sufficient dynamic to make it even possible. Whence is this wonderful "minority" to arise? and what is to sustain them in their cleansing of the Augean stables of civilization? The words of Mr. R. Blatchford to his fellow-Socialists some little time since, come forcibly to mind and are well worth transcribing. Said he:

"Whatever revolution may be raised, must be raised and carried through by fallible and imperfect men. Whatever Utopia is established, must be capable of management and continuance by normal men. We cannot get rid of the average man. Reformers hardly ever realize this. They always legislate for angels. They think that though it seems impossible to get one honest and capable Parliament, it will be the easiest thing in the world to find a thousand Soviets, composed entirely of men as honest as Buddha, as wise as Socrates, and as patient as Job. I assure you, my sea-green, incorruptible friends, that it cannot be done. You have got to make your Utopia out of us human clayshapes, and to make it so that we can stand it when it is made. If you succeed in overturning Society, where do you expect to find your forty millions of pure-souled, clear-brained, generous citizens, to carry on your Utopia?"

That is indeed the question of questions, not only for William Clissold—and Messrs. Wells and Shaw—but for all would-be human reformers. But it is the very beating heart of the real Gospel for which the name of Jesus stands, that every genuine disciple finds in Him the unfailing dynamic, which the great Apostle found in the midst of all his strenuous labours.

“In everything (in detail) and in all things (put together), I have learned the secret (I have been initiated into the mystery) both to be well cared for and to be half-starved, both to have plenty, and to be in real want—I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.”

No cynical or unfriendly criticism can truthfully dismiss this source of strength as mere imagination. For it is as real, even if as indefinable, as the vital vigour which makes an athlete do easily that which would crush an invalid to attempt. In this present age, Paul's secret of endurance is equally real for all who share his convictions and devotion.

So that the real Gospel is no Utopia. The tenderness of its spiritual depth, the loftiness of its ethical height, the comprehensiveness of its social breadth, are not a mere pietistic dream. They represent the eternal purpose of the Father whom Jesus reveals; they constitute the very substance of that Kingdom of Heaven on earth which He came in the Father's name to establish and develop. It is, indeed, but partially and poorly realized at present, thanks to human perversity within as well as without the Churches that bear His name. But enough has been demonstrated in the past, and is increasingly manifest in the present, to show that there can come to humanity no more real “glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people,” than the Gospel of love divine which Jesus proclaimed and incarnated. In the degree in which that Gospel is heeded, accepted, acted on, earth's sorrows are mitigated, its miseries prevented or healed, its fears lightened, and its hells transformed into heaven. It

remains for the Christianity of the future to show that such a Kingdom of Heaven is verily "at hand."

5. EVOLUTION

Evolution has become the magic word of the age. Since the days of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer, it has been the dominating theme in all scientific circles. It is described, defined, discussed, in an ever-growing legion of books and reviews. It is accepted and emphasized at all the Universities, and is assumed as a commonplace in the daily press. At the same time, it is altogether denied, and bitterly opposed, by a minority of religionists and some few scientists; whilst its advocates are distinctly divided into two schools—the Atheistic or Agnostic on the one hand, and the Theistic or Christian on the other. It is undoubtedly broadbased upon Darwinism, and its modern development may be said to have started with the issue of the *Origin of Species* on 24th November 1859. But whether Darwinism, as thus outlined, remains the real explanation or conception of evolution, is another matter. It has been truly said that—

"The *vera causa* of evolution is still to seek. Modern scientists now clearly recognize that Darwin's views will need many modifications, and even reversals, before the law of evolution emerges into anything approaching its final form. It is still only in the Ptolemaic stage."¹

Amidst such a conflict and flux of opinions, a brief summary seems to be of little value; especially in view of such issues as Professor Thomson's works,² and the elaborate exposition found in the collective work entitled *Evolution in the Light*

¹ *Through Evolution to the Living God*, J. R. Cohe, p. 103.

² Such as *The Bible of Nature, Concerning Evolution, The Gospel of Evolution*—with a legion of other similar works by competent writers.

of *Modern Knowledge*. But it is impossible, in accordance with the purpose of these pages, to omit it altogether. All that is here necessary may be comprised under the following ten principles :

(i) For a general statement of what evolution really means, apart from Herbert Spencer's highly technical and well-known definition, this may be taken as a fair representation :

"Broadly speaking, we may describe evolution as the dynamical process by which the totality of things, i.e. the Universe, has come to be what it is, by a very slow and gradual transition from lower and simpler to higher and more complex forms of being, through a successive series of slow, little by little, progressive changes and developments, very much of the same sort as we see going on to-day. At every stage in this age-long evolutionary process, the condition of things at any given moment, has been the natural and necessary outcome of the condition of things at the previous moment." ¹

But for comparison's sake, it may be well to note also these other statements. Huxley's summary, in his *Life of Darwin*, is very comprehensive. It is there affirmed—

"That the whole world, living and not living, is the result of the mutual interaction, according to definite laws, of the powers possessed by the molecules of which the primitive nebosity of the universe was composed."

In regard more especially to organic evolution, with which we humans are most closely concerned, Professor Thomson states it thus :

"Stated concretely, the general doctrine of descent or organic evolution suggests that the plants and animals now around us are the results of natural processes working throughout the ages ; that the forms we now see are the lineal descendants of ancestors on the whole somewhat simpler ; that these are descended from yet simpler forms, and so on backward, till we lose our clue in the unknown—but doubtless momentous—vital events of pre-Cambrian ages ; in other words, in the thick mist of life's beginnings." ²

¹ J. R. Coahu, *op. cit.* p. 98.

² *The Bible of Nature*, p. 137.

(ii) Now accepting these as fair general statements, the first note to be made is that this is not a scientific explanation of the universe, or indeed of anything else. To speak of "definite laws," is pure assumption. All that we see or know is a procession of events. In Professor Thomson's words as to evolution :

"We accept it, because it fits the facts we know ; because no facts contradict it ; because it is congruent with our interpretation of other orders of facts." ¹

But as regards explanation, the same author's other statement is in point :

"There have been some who have not hesitated to publish abroad what they regard as a scientific clearing up of the riddles of the universe, leaving their gullible readers with the impression that everything has been explained. It would be more accurate to say that as far as science is concerned, nothing has been explained." ²

Still more explicitly we have the acknowledgement that :

"While science aims at redescribing in the simplest available terms what has taken place in the past, and goes on taking place now, it does not pretend to explain anything."

Huxley's own words are also to the same effect :

"It is very desirable to remember that evolution is not an explanation of the cosmos, but merely a generalized statement of the method and results of that process."

(iii) On the whole, it must now be acknowledged that this conception of the progress of events is true. The worthy statement and full discussion of the reasons for accepting evolution as the real method of creation, must be sought and may be found in the numberless publications which relate to it. As Professor Thomson says :

"It is very absurd to think that one clears up the problem of origins by pronouncing the word 'Evolution.' One cannot see the emergence of the first birds from a stock of extinct dinosaur reptiles. From the nature of the case that can never be proved ; and yet one is as certain of the fact as one can be about any prehistoric event."

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 137.

² *Op. cit.* p. 241.

But it is certain that the evolutionary hypothesis would never have obtained the hold which it now has of the scientific world, without some very substantial reasons. Mr. W. M'Dougall, F.R.S., puts it thus :

" The general theory of organic evolution rests on four main lines of evidence : (i) The evidence of comparative anatomy ; (ii) the evidence of embryology ; (iii) the evidence of palæontology ; (iv) the evidence of genetics, the experimental breeding of animals and plants. These four lines of evidence taken together, suffice to establish the theory for all who are capable of drawing a conclusion from a great mass of recorded facts." ¹

In another form the reasons for the acceptance of evolution as a true account of the present condition of animals and plants, may be summarized under these seven heads : (i) The distribution of animals in space. (ii) Their manifestly successive appearance in time. (iii) The whole testimony of palæontology, including anthropology and the study of human and pre-human remains. (iv) Present-day knowledge of comparative anatomy, with all the facts of homology. (v) The facts of embryology which show " how the individual development reads like a condensed recapitulation of presumed racial evolution." ² (vi) " The existence of vestigial organs such as the appendix, in the human body, with the muscles of the outer ear and relics of the third eyelid, and many instances in other animals. (vii) The actual changes brought about by experiments on living animals and plants ; also including remarkable results from the transfusion of blood. The details of all these elements in the case are plentifully given elsewhere, as well as in the few works mentioned above.

" There are about eighty vestigial structures in man's muscular, skeletal, and other systems—a large museum of relics which he carries about with him, enigmatical except in the light of the past." ³

¹ *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 330.

² See Professor Thomson's *Concerning Evolution*, p. 80.

³ *The Bible of Nature*, p. 190.

On the whole, therefore, the avowal of Mr. J. McCabe is not too strong, that :

“ The basis of the theory of evolution is the whole universe and everything in it. Not one thing in the universe has been found which is inconsistent with evolution ; whilst millions of things in it bear witness to evolution, as plainly as smoke bears witness to fire. Scientists who believe in God are just as convinced as those who do not. Not one will admit that there is room for doubt about evolution.” ¹

(iv) From the above it follows that Creationism, that is, the whole notion of special creation as illustrated in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and many theological manuals, is simply untrue, and for that reason ought to be dismissed from religion as really as from science. There is no question as to the antiquity of man. The witness of eoliths takes us back at least 300,000 years, so that, in Professor Thomson’s words :

“ It seems justifiable to date the antiquity of the human race not later than the time when the anthropoid apes are known to have been established as a distinct family. This takes us back to Miocene ages, and that means many hundreds of thousands of years ago.” ²

Special creation, on the lines of a literal interpretation of Genesis, not only makes the undeniable vestigial organs a reflection on divine wisdom, but reduces Theism to an unworthy Deism. So that the only “creation” which is valid for Christian faith, is such as Dr. Iverach has expressed :

“ To me creation is continuous. To me everything is as it is through the continuous power of God ; every law, every being, every relation of being are determined by Him, and He is the power by which all things exist. I believe in the immanence of God in the world, and I do not believe that He comes forth merely at a crisis, as Mr. Wallace supposed.” ³

¹ *R.P.A. Annual for 1926*, p. 12.

² *Bible of Nature*, p. 192.

³ *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 175.

Or, as Mr. Cohn says :

“ Never has there been a break in the line of continuity ; and it has ever been a gradual transition from the simple to the more complex, from the lower to the higher, till from comparatively insignificant beginnings the process of evolution has achieved the world of values which we know.” ¹

(v) The last two excerpts are from well-known Christian teachers, and that fact may be regarded as testifying to the truth that the theory of evolution does not necessarily involve either Atheism or Agnosticism, in spite of the assertions of some such writers as Mr. J. McCabe, Professor Julian Huxley, and Mr. J. S. Haldane. Detailed discussion of this fact is not here called for. It is enough to point out that by all acknowledgement evolution represents not only a process, but an upward process, which cannot rationally be ascribed to chance. The fundamental question must ever be : “ What directs and determines the particular paths along which these molecules in motion under the energy of force, travel to their particular results ? ” ² As Professor Japp said in a memorable meeting of the British Association :

“ No fortuitous concourse of atoms, even with all eternity for them to clash and combine in, could compass the feat of the formation of the first optically active organic compound.” ³

So that Dr. J. M. Wilson, the veteran and venerable Christian and Scientist, has good warrant for the conclusion to which his impartial discussion of “ the religious effect ” of evolution comes, in the collective work referred to above : ⁴

“ To be a whole-hearted evolutionist is, in a word, not inconsistent with either the habits or the hopes of religion, with prayer and worship, with effort so to study the Bible as to think of God and

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 99.

² J. R. Cohn, *op. cit.* p. 100.

³ See Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, p. 121.

⁴ P. 512.

man more and more as Christ thought, and to act accordingly; nor is it inconsistent with widely diverse intellectual and spiritual temperaments. The discovery that the method of creation has been that of evolution, should be regarded as a revelation to man of the being and working of God."

(vi) But more than that. Evolution, as the only theory of creation which does justice to all the facts, instead of being Atheistic or Agnostic, involves a far higher and worthier conception of Theism than special creation. It is manifestly true that—

"The words 'in Him we live and move and have our being' are filled by evolution with a new meaning, for it brings back God into His world as an intense and ever-present reality. At the same time it corrects our narrow anthropomorphic views of God." ¹

There is unmeasured room for such correction in the popular presentation of Christianity by the average preacher and teacher. The words of the venerable nonagenarian Christian teacher of science mentioned above, express one of the greatest needs of the Christianity of the future:

"The facts of evolution have revealed a vastness in the scales of space and time and a continuity which could not in an earlier age have been realized. Evolution has therefore corrected many crudities and errors in man's first thoughts of God, arising from his imperfect science—first thoughts which tradition and reverence for the past have long handed down and mistakenly regarded as final revelations from God." ²

For a long time the God of popular theology has been too small to win the faith and reverence of modern minds. The narrow anthropomorphisms of past creeds have alienated many who should have been won for the Kingdom of Heaven; so that evolution is as timely as it is true. The popular notion, so sedulously fostered by some "Rationalists," that the process of evolution involves

¹ Cohu, *op. cit.* p. 227.

² *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 512.

only a murderous conflict between creatures "red in tooth and claw with ravine," has been sufficiently confuted above. The attempts to make the "struggle for existence" contradict the divine Fatherhood which Jesus taught, are utterly abortive in the light of truth. Professor Thomson's reminder that "the world is not merely the battlefield of the strong, but the home of the loving," is the truthful summary. Still, for the benefit of some who may not have met with the plain statement of Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, the co-discoverer of the main principle of evolution, it may be well to repeat it here, as a set-off against the oft-repeated pessimism of Huxley and others :

"There is good reason to believe that the supposed torments and miseries of animals have little real existence—that the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence is altogether insignificant. The popular idea of that struggle entailing misery and pain on the animal world, is the very reverse of the truth. When we reflect on the struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy, survive and multiply."

(vii) The popular impression which at first prevailed, that Evolution tended to belittle human nature, in tracing its "descent" from "apes" or lower animals, has now been sufficiently corrected to put an end to the foolish gibes in which some Christian folk have indulged, from the famous sneer of the Bishop of Oxford which drew out Huxley's crushing retort, to the latest outcry of Fundamentalism. It is both made plain that man's history is an ascent not a descent, and that no more reflection is cast upon his present high estate by his lowly origin, than upon the genius of Shakespeare by the fact that he was once a foetus in embryo. The significance and value of any progressive production have to be judged, not from the beginning but the end of the progression. And if, as

Sir Arthur Keith authoritatively tells us, it has taken 100 million years to bring to pass a human being, then the dignity, the worth, the potentiality, the prospects, of humanity, are measurelessly more than could have been predicated of a being described in a legend as created with magical suddenness out of literal dust, and sent out into a world with which he had no connection. Those who are yet afraid that evolution detracts from the greatness of human nature, will find quite enough to set their minds at rest in the Essex Hall Lecture for 1926 by Professor Thomson.¹

(viii) It becomes thus manifest that evolution is, above all else, a lesson in hope. It has been truly said that—“The static creationist view is so deeply rooted in us, that even naturalists sometimes seem to forget that evolution is still going on.” The immeasurable marvels of the past afford abundant warrant for anticipating, and believing in, yet greater wonders and developments in the future. It is alike unthinkable that a microcosm which has taken 100 million years to produce, should either stop suddenly in the midst of the vast progression, or wholly pass out of being through the disintegration of the physical frame which enshrines the mental and spiritual ego. Such a suggestion, as Mr. Fiske long ago declared, would “put us to intellectual confusion.” The possibilities of the future, both in this life and beyond, are indeed boundless. Some astronomers “predict a future for humanity of not less than 10 million years,” which may be mere scientific imagination. But there is certainly no reason to yield to the Fundamentalist interpretation of the New Testament, in looking for some overwhelming cataclysm which will ere long end all human progression. Professor Pringle Pattison has well expressed what evolution really amounts to :

¹ Entitled *Man in the Light of Evolution* (The Lindsey Press); also in the same author's *Gospel of Evolution* (Geo. Newnes).

"The belief that we are living in a cosmos, not a chaos; the belief that the Power at work in the Universe will not put us to permanent intellectual confusion. This is an ultimate trust which is not capable of demonstration, though progressively verified and justified by every step we take in the intellectual conquest of the world."

And certainly, in regard to the possibilities of a yet nobler life to come, when the hindrances and imperfections of a physical organism are left behind:

"Evolution, as Bergson shows, endorses with all its might the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and this carries with it the assurance of a compensation for suffering and a redress for wrongs."¹

(ix) The question of course arises how is all this related to the Bible? Into the ocean of controversy to which that leads, we need not now enter. It is enough to point out that whilst the opening chapters of Genesis are certainly neither exact science nor literal history, their legendary significance and value are not contradicted but explained by evolution. The facts of evolution are the prose translation of the ancient poetry. The remarkable upward progression related in Genesis i. which elicited even the admiration of Haeckel, was and is quite scientific enough to have been, at the time of its writing, a trustworthy vehicle of the great theistic lesson intended. Whilst as to the Fall—of which past theology has had so much to say, though Jesus said nothing²—Mr. Cohu is quite right when he reminds us that:

¹ Cohu, *Through Evolution to the Living God*, p. 234.

² The suggestion of Dr. J. A. Fleming in his booklet, *Evolution and Revelation* (R.T.S.), that there was a pre-Adamic race, and that the first creation of man was that of a psychical or rational man but not a spiritual man—then, that there was a second creation of spiritual man, i.e. Adam, so that the Fall "meant falling back into the condition of the merely psychical or pre-Adamic man," is sheer imagination, without any rational, scientific, or Scriptural support. It is amazing that a man of such scientific eminence should commit himself to a theory of gaps issuing in so bizarre a suggestion. It

" Evolution, as modern thought now can see, never has had such a set-back as the Fall implies. What is called the Fall was a necessary moment in the transition from the stage of nature to the stage of culture. It represents the dawn of moral consciousness in man." ¹

(x) Such an estimate, corroborated as it is by the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, and those of Dr. J. M. Wilson, above quoted,² gives the best and utmost hope for the future, in making possible a helpful alliance instead of bitter conflict between science and religion. The acrimonious controversy during the latter half of the nineteenth century, between scientists and ecclesiastics, was then inevitable, for both the interpretation of nature and of the Bible were at fault. But men of science, no less than men of religion, have learned much since then, and there is now no reason why the ideal of the venerable Scientist last mentioned, should not come to pass for the benefit of humanity at large.

" Nothing short of full co-operation between religion and science offers hope for the improvement of human nature, through racial evolution and the reversal of the dysgenic influences of civilization—religion, the sense of being God's agents, to show us wherein improvement consists, and to fortify our will for its attainment; and science, a wholly truthful study of facts, to guide us wisely and rightly in the choice of methods for attaining that improvement." ³

(xi) It thus becomes manifest that when rightly understood, evolution is a help not a hindrance to real Christianity. It is, confessedly, not only a hindrance but an end to some theological conceits and ecclesiastical dogmas, which have blocked the way of Christ's Kingdom of Heaven on earth during past ages. But these were just things which

does not call for discussion, but once more illustrates the extent to which even able men may be brought under the sway of a predetermined estimate of the Bible and its significance.

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 226.

² See pp. 135, 158, 159.

³ *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 513.

had to be shaken, and could not remain. Whether evolution be wholly accepted or not, it is certain that the promulgations of Calvinism and the assertions of Bibliolatry cannot touch the intelligence of to-day any more than the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Faith in these days must be based on reasons, and the reasons must be true to history and science. Dr. Iverach's statement is well warranted :

" The new problem of rational evolution is to persuade rational beings to be wholly rational, moral beings to be wholly moral, and religious beings to be wholly and adequately religious. The Christian view of the world is the only view which does justice to all the factors of evolution and recognizes all its complexity."

Just as it is no less true that the evolutionary view is the only view which does justice to what we know, thus far of the universe. Mr. M'Cabe has only stated the truth in averring that—

" In seventy years of research all over the earth, no fact has yet turned up that is inconsistent with evolution. On the contrary, everything points to it,"¹

The Christianity of the future is bound to be as true to the facts of nature, as to its own history and main principles. In so doing, it will be as the house built on the rock of which Jesus said so impressively that when " the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house—it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock." In other words, it will answer to His assurance—" You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

(xii) One other note is worth making, though it cannot here be elaborated. The problem of evil is always with us, in its development, if not as to its origin. The former is for the Christian Church to overcome, the latter is for philosophy to consider. But evolution, as the scientific clue, may help even as Dr. Wilson suggests :

¹ *R.P.A. Annual for 1926*, p. 13.

“ It suggests a new approach to one of the oldest and profoundest subjects of speculation. For evolutionists are in fact restating the old insoluble problem of the origin of evil in a new form, as that of the emergence of good out of, or in association with, the seemingly incongruous non-moral elements of nature.” ¹

It is quite true that most Christians connected with churches are more concerned with the actuality of evil and its results, than with its origin. But these are times of ever-increasing education, and it is as necessary sometimes to face the problems of the thoughtful, as at others to heal the sorrows of the sad.

This section cannot close without some specific reference to the attitude of those who in this country, as well as in America, have come to be known as Fundamentalists. The name is derived from an elaborate series of booklets which were sent out all over the world by two laymen—it is said at the cost of some £26,000—advocating, in the most strenuous terms, all the doctrines of the evangelical “ orthodoxy ” of the past. In these booklets, as well as in other innumerable publications of a similar character, the bitterest spleen has been displayed, and the most violent language employed against the whole conception of evolution. The American opposition reached its climax in 1925, at Dayton in Tennessee, where, amidst great excitement, a school teacher was publicly tried and condemned for teaching in his school the principles of evolution. It may truly be described as an occasion for smiles, and frowns, and tears. A lamentable specimen, indeed, of the extremes to which religious fanaticism can go, even when, thanks to the modern atmosphere, practical tyranny and physical tortures are no longer permissible. But there is no doubt that very many in the Evangelical churches of this country share the American views, and numbers of publications are being issued to that effect. One special

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 514.

instance which has attracted some notice by its audacity, is a volume by Rev. H. C. Morton, entitled *The Bankruptcy of Evolution*, in which, besides all the other vagaries of one-sided special pleading, all the "foul immorality" associated with the anti-Christian virulence of Nietzsche, is said to be "directly traceable to the influence of Darwinism." Then further, after pouring scorn upon Darwin's methods and illustrations, upon the "Higher Criticism," the "epistemology of Pragmatism," and the Utilitarian theory of ethics, the writer sums all up with the avowal that—

"Such are some of the philosophic religious and ethical results of the theory of evolution, rendered fascinatingly clear and plausible in its Darwinian form—such results as justify us in saying that in this theory,

"Divine philosophy
Has pushed beyond her mark, to be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell."

It is neither our duty nor purpose here, to controvert this specious volume in detail—that is sufficiently done elsewhere. It merely attracts notice as a cleverly audacious attempt to flout the whole modern trend of thought referred to above. The falsity of its general standpoint is manifest in the Preface, where we are bluntly told that—

"Darwinism is dead, and will soon be buried without hope of resurrection. But without Darwinism Evolution is the mere empty shell of a venerable speculation. Darwin is substantial, tangible, vivid flesh and blood; and without him, Evolution is a vague shadow form, an ancient ghost which haunts the hills of philosophic thought—only that and nothing more."

Such dogmatism is mere assertion, as false to fact as true to Fundamentalism. For, first, Darwinism is not dead. Apart from other proofs thereof, the latest public utterance is that of Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, Reader in Biochemistry, Cambridge University, from the standpoint of pure science :

“ Finally, no facts definitely irreconcilable with Darwinism have been discovered in the sixty years and more that have elapsed since the formulation of Darwin’s views.”

Whilst as to the absolute dependence of evolution upon Darwin, the audacity of such a statement is only equalled by its falsity. To say nothing of the fact that no attempt whatever is made in this whole volume to do justice to inorganic evolution, the additional statement by Mr. Haldane merits careful regard :

“ As an explanation of evolution, Darwin’s ideas still hold the field to-day, and subsequent work has necessitated less modification of them than of those of his contemporaries in physics and chemistry. Just as physiology has found no case of interference with the order of nature as revealed by physics and chemistry, the study of evolution has brought to light no principle which cannot be observed in the experience of ordinary life, and successfully submitted to the analysis of reason.”¹

That the principle of evolution is not merely extended Darwinism, is witnessed in many directions, but the collective volume mentioned above, will well enable the reader to judge for himself. He will then know how to estimate the assertion that “ it is a strange claim that while Darwinism is rejected, evolution is still firmly established.” One specimen of this writer’s method may be taken as typical of the whole. After acknowledging that

“ The five chief considerations are palæontological, those concerned with rudimentary structures, embryological, anatomical, and classificatory,”

some thirty-six pages are occupied in the endeavour to turn their witness to evolution into delusion. Such a summary will make the real student smile—or frown. But only one note is here possible, namely, in reference to “ rudimentary or vestigial structures.” It would be well that the whole question should not be begged by

¹ *R.P.A. Annual for 1926*, p. 64.

omitting—as in the summary above quoted—the term “vestigial.” But of these structures only five are mentioned, whereas there are at least eighty to reckon with. The argument for evolution from these is pronounced “not conclusive—as being an argument in a circle.” But the false logic is in the writer’s premiss—“The theory of evolution demands that rudimentary structures should be vestigial.” Indeed, it does nothing of the kind. It makes no demand at all; save that all the facts should be fairly taken into account, and the *vera causa* of them discovered on reasonable principles. It is only Fundamentalist prejudice which “demands” that such a fact as the present too long 30-foot intestinal tube, with the now useless and dangerous appendix attached—causing numbers of deaths each year—should be regarded as the special creation of God, because the Bible says so; and then, as a veritable argument in a circle, urges that Genesis must be inspired because it anticipates modern science. Every student of physiology and comparative anatomy will know how to appreciate the shuffle that—

“When we know more about these structures, it may easily come to pass that because of their usefulness they harmonize with the doctrine of Special Creation.”

The way in which leading men of science who are known to be pronounced evolutionists are dismissed, is typically illustrated in the reference to Professor William Bateson, who is said on one page to be “Professor of Biology at Cambridge, and probably the foremost authority upon evolutionary questions in the English-speaking world.” Whilst on another we are calmly told that—

“His own profession that he still holds to the theory of Evolution, and still traces all forms of life back to protoplasm, *merely shows the bias of his mind* towards the doctrine of Descent, and is exactly to be described, with apologies for the entirely improper adjective, as a pious opinion.”

Putting these two together, one really ought to say, without apologies for the adjective, that such conceited dogmatism as the words italicized—by me—involve, is neither science nor philosophy, but sheer insult. Any cause which needs such advocacy must be in a bad way. If, however, any reader is in danger of being impressed by the plausibilities of the volume in question, he has but to turn—in addition to the works already named above, to the list at the end of the small volume by Professors Thomson and Geddes, entitled *Evolution*, in the Home University Library. He may also note with profit the summary of Mr. J. McCabe, entitled *The Triumph of Evolution*,¹ which, although written confessedly from the Agnostic standpoint, is true to all the facts, and gives to the volume criticized above all the attention it deserves.

When all that what is called “Special Creation” involves is duly considered, it becomes no less than a tragedy from the Christian standpoint, that the sincere but fanatic resistance to new truth which led Luther and Melancthon in the fifteenth century to denounce Copernicus, and in the seventeenth moved Romish ecclesiastics to send Galileo to the dungeons of the Inquisition, should still in the Twentieth Century maintain a similar attitude, and so help incalculably to make the Christianity of the future impossible for the most promising minds of the rising generation. Assuredly the words of Jesus Himself set before His Church a nobler ideal, when He said that—“Every religious teacher who has been well trained for the Kingdom of Heaven, is like a housekeeper who brings forth out of his stores things new as well as old.”

There is, however, one special aspect of evolution which cannot be honestly omitted from any Christian acceptance of its truth, without further thoughtful reference. The two main pillars of the truth for which Fundamentalists so

¹ *R.P.A. Annual for 1926*, published by Watts & Co.

earnestly contend are: (i) "The divinity and infallibility of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and (ii) "The absolute and final authority of the Bible." Their sincere and intelligent devotion in these respects merits respectful regard and careful consideration, even in the brief summary here attempted.

As regards the latter of the two themes just mentioned, the manifestation of progressive revelation by means of spiritual evolution, through all the Old Testament—when all its parts are taken in their true historical order—is too plain, and in these days too widely acknowledged, to call for further detailed discussion here. Nothing can be added to the clearness and sufficiency with which this truth has been set forth in recent literature. Yet it may perhaps be well to mention a few works, out of a host, as being so unanswerable herein that it would be sheer waste of time and strength to reason with those who reject such main principles. *The Bible its Origin, Significance, and Abiding Worth*, by Professor Peake (Hodder); *The Modern Use of the Bible*, by Dr. H. E. Fosdick (Student Christian Movement); *Sixty Years with the Bible*, by Dr. W. N. Clarke (T. & T. Clark); *The Appeal of the Bible To-day*, by Dr. Thistleton Mark (Nelson); *The People and the Book*—Essays on the Old Testament by members of the Society for Old Testament study (Oxford Clarendon Press).

But as regards the nature and Person and work of Jesus, it must be acknowledged that from the Christian standpoint, the crux of the whole question in regard to evolution, lies in its reference to Jesus Christ as portrayed in the New Testament. This not only involves some real difficulties, but is seldom fairly faced by Christian writers as it should be. But Dr. Cadoux is quite justified in his statement ¹ that—"One of the necessities of modern Christian thought

¹ *The Gospel that Jesus Preached*, p. 213.

is to relate the doctrine of the incarnation to the doctrine of evolution." Most of the many excellent works which deal with the relation of evolution to Theism, stop short at the point where ordinary sincere thought most needs guidance. In regard to pure Theism, the question of evolution may with reason be regarded as settled. Dr. Dixey has truly said that—

"The uncertainty which must be admitted still to prevail as to the details of the process of evolution, does not affect the central truth, which must be taken to be as well established in its main features, as any of the generalizations of science. Unless we are prepared to give up the results of the investigation of Nature since the earliest times, as mere delusions, we must accept evolution.

"Final causes, for a time discredited or ignored, have once more come to the front. They not only exist, they are all-important; for whatever there may remain still to be learnt concerning the method of evolution, there is no doubt that it consists essentially in a series of adaptations to environment, determined in the long run by utility." ¹

But when he concludes with the avowal that—

"The way to a reasoned acceptance of the Christian verities has been made easier and safer in our own time than perhaps ever before, by the illuminating principle of evolution," ²

it is impossible to be content with such a general statement. The greatest "Christian verity" is Christ Himself; and the question, "What think ye of Christ?" is simply inevitable for all evolutionists. It is impossible satisfactorily to summarize an answer to that query, but seeing that there is valid discussion elsewhere, it is all that need be here attempted. The possibility of a thoroughgoing evolutionary Christology is as yet debatable; and the difficulties involved are such as to demand the utmost Christian patience in their consideration. The main matters for careful thought are these: (i) The principle of continuity in relation to the personality of Jesus. (ii)

¹ *Topics of the Times* (S.P.C.K.), pp. 137, 140.

² P. 141.

The question as to His Virgin Birth. (iii) The significance of the principle of evolution in the nature and character of Jesus. (iv) Its relation to the significance of His death and resurrection. In regard to all these there are such differences of opinion on the part of equally sincere and competent students, that Dr. Garvie adopts the right attitude in saying that "there are too many exact scholars and genuine Christians on either side of the discussion, to warrant a confidence which would be both immodest and uncharitable." It may be useful to illustrate these differences of judgement. Thus Professor Henslow, as an able scientist and pronounced evolutionist, wrote a small volume in order to demonstrate that, in his own words, "Christ was a new creation, and no product of evolution." So too, Dr. Iverach, in the volume in which he pleaded for the Christian acceptance of evolution, added this :

"If we accept evolution as a method of the divine working, a working by wise and adequate methods for a foreseen end, revelation itself will be seen to be of a piece with that process of evolution which has for end and purpose the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Scripture also is an evolution growing from small beginnings to greater and greater fulness and clearness until the end. It is impossible indeed to place Christ in the midst of a process of evolution ; for He claims to be the First and the Last and the Living One ; and His exceptional claim will be vindicated by all Christians, and must in a measure be conceded by all men." ¹

Dr. Orr wrote to the same effect in his volume upon *The Virgin Birth of Christ* :

"We have not said everything about Jesus when we have said sinlessness. We mount a stage higher when we regard Him as He is set forth to us in Scripture as the Second Adam of our race, and new creative beginning in humanity. Viewing Jesus as a sinless personality, there is involved a supernatural act in the production of His bodily nature."

¹ *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 207.

There is no question that these views are tenaciously maintained by vast numbers in modern Christendom, whose intelligence and sincerity are alike impeccable. Yet, on the other hand, there are growing numbers who would endorse what follows. Dr. Lyman Abbott wrote :

“ There are not and cannot be two kinds of divinity. If we believe this, if we believe that evolution is simply God’s method of manifesting Himself, then we need not be afraid to say that Jesus Christ is the supreme product of continuous evolution in human history, for this simply means that Jesus is the supreme manifestation which history affords of the divine.”¹

Even more plainly and comprehensively speaks Dr. Cadoux, in the volume above specified :

“ This view sees Jesus as the culmination of the whole evolutionary process, which is thus the travail of God’s incarnation at length achieved in Him. And this view removes a difficulty ; for as long as we regard the incarnation of God as a solitary act, the rest of human history offers an obstacle to our reception and understanding of it. For though all Christian thought grants that God did in Jesus what He did in no other, the miraculous view of the incarnation assumes that God had not been trying to do it in others. This implies that the world, apart from, or at least before, Jesus, is a world of men and women for whose good God did not do all that He might have done ; and so it stands as a contradiction to Jesus’ thought of God.”²

Again :

“ But if we accept the theory of evolution, and think of God’s work in the world as continuous, then we must regard His incarnation in Jesus as being related to the preceding evolutionary process as closely as the preceding stages are related to each other. For unless God intended the evolutionary development of life to lead up to the incarnation of Himself in Jesus He lacks continuity of purpose. But if one divine will and purpose are behind both evolution and incarnation, then the evolutionary process must be regarded as God’s means to His incarnation, and there will be no break of continuity between them. Thus the work of Jesus appears in the

¹ *The Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 74.

² P. 213.

closest and most essential connection with the whole process of human evolution. To consider Him as an extraneous insertion into human history, is wantonly to diminish and obscure his significance. It would seem rather that in Him, at length, life came to full consciousness of itself, and full awareness of its divine secret—"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." ¹

In the important volume mentioned above—*Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*—twelve acknowledged experts in modern science state the case for evolution from their respective standpoints. But the final article in the book is by the veteran scientist referred to above, Dr. J. M. Wilson, who considers the whole case from the religious standpoint. Seeing that he has so long been well known also as an eminent Christian teacher, his deliberate summing up should have real weight :

"In the past there were two separate spheres of existence wholly distinct in kind. They were regarded respectively as natural and supernatural. But now the human mind—ought we not to say under the continuous teaching of man by the Spirit of truth—is rejecting the whole conception of this irruption of one sphere into the other. It identifies in kind what we have called the supernatural with the natural. It makes the spiritual and the natural continuous and equally divine. If God has ever been anywhere, He is here among us now. This identification is, as it were, regularized by the idea of evolution. This is the needed continuity ; gained not by denying or degrading the supernatural, but by raising the natural into entire continuity with it. The facts of evolution and continuity are indicating that the chain of mind reaches up to the Creative Spirit to God Himself, and that the supreme manifestation on our earth of the divine in that chain is Jesus Christ. Evolution not only suggests that it is in human personality, as sharing in the divine nature, that we shall best seek to find God, but also, by insisting upon continuity, it leads us straight to the One manifestation of God in which men have most fully found and seen and known Him." ²

When we turn from the actuality of the unique nature and person of Jesus to consider His origin, the two questions

¹ Pp. 213, 225.

² Pp. 503, 504, 505.

which have to be answered are, first, whether the Virgin Birth is to be regarded as historically true; and then, whether it is, as such, a really essential article of Christian faith. Here again, it must be owned that there is amongst Christian scholars a definite difference of judgement. The fact that the Romish Church, together with its "Anglo-Catholic" followers, insist absolutely and without any hesitation, upon the reality of the Virgin Birth, is no rational answer whatever to either of the above queries. Mere dogmatic affirmation proves nothing. The authority of "The Church" is simply an ecclesiastical mirage. When we come to the use of that judgement which Jesus Himself so emphasized—see Luke xii. 57—each of the opposing views finds able advocacy. One or two specimens will suffice. On behalf of the "orthodox" view Dr. Orr spoke strongly, and with much reason, in the volume above mentioned. Here is his summary :

"I cannot acquiesce in the opinion that the article of the Virgin Birth is one doctrinally indifferent, or that can be legitimately dropped from the public creed of the Church. The rejection of this article would in my judgement be a mutilation of Scripture, a contradiction of the continuous testimony of the Church from Apostolic times, a weakening of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and a practical surrender of the Christian position into the hands of a non-miraculous, purely humanitarian Christ—all on insufficient ground."¹

On the other hand, Dr. Cadoux speaks for many more when he lays stress upon some of the expressions used in the Gospels, such as Luke's reference to Joseph and Mary as Jesus' "father and mother" (ii. 33), to "His parents"; to Mary speaking of Joseph to Jesus as "Thy father," and other references. He further writes that—

"If a man says that he cannot accept Jesus' truth of God unless he can know Him pre-existent and virgin-born, the position is unchristian but intelligible. If we say that to us Jesus is morally

¹ P. 229.

and spiritually supreme by right of what He was in character and spirit, apart from all question of origin, we are undoubtedly accepting His supremacy as He would have it accepted ; but how then can we plead that pre-existence and virgin birth are necessities of thought ? They can only be necessary if they are necessary to explain the moral and spiritual supremacy of Jesus.

“ To account for Jesus by miracle, is to say that He is different from other men because in His case God did something that He is not willing to do in the case of other men. But if the goodness of Jesus has a presupposition that ours must lack, He cannot be our moral ideal. If God is not willing to do for all men what He did for Jesus, He cannot want all men to be like Him, and Jesus is therefore not the interpreter of God’s will, nor the revealer of God’s character.” ¹

In his latest important volume on *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, Dr. Garvie, whilst not concealing his own preference, utters a kind of eirenicon :

“ The Virgin Birth, disputed as the fact is, cannot be relied on in any convincing argument for the divinity of Jesus, and is indeed irrelevant, as it concerns the humanity and not the divinity, for God is not born, but man. The writer himself does not feel justified in a confident denial or affirmation of the fact, although he leans to the latter.

“ Without any confident dogmatism in regard to the matter, if the Virgin Birth be fact, so interpreted, it does make incarnation more intelligible and credible. If it be proved that Jesus was sinless and perfect, and that He was conscious of a unique relation to God as Son to Father, then the fact of the Virgin Birth becomes more probable, and can be interpreted in such a way as at least partially to explain that sinlessness.” ²

In view of these typical statements of such divided judgments, the whole question, together with its bearing on the other two queries specified above, must be left to individual conviction. The same general principles must here be adopted, as in regard to all other elements of Christian belief. The one certainty is that in these and coming days, sheer emphatic dogmatism will no longer

¹ Pp. 207, 208.

² Pp. 43, 44, 47.

avail. Be the cost and conflict, what they may, the following principles are both those which alone can be called Christian, and which will bear to be cast into the crucible of modern thought. (i) Every man must decide for himself what he holds to be true. No man, and no Church, can relieve him of that responsibility. (ii) In so doing, as a rational being, he, or she, must exercise all his powers of mind, and be absolutely true to what he finds. (iii) The final test of Christ's Gospel is not what a man thinks, but what he is. (iv) In the degree in which any man holds that his view is true above all others, he is bound to show it in superiority of character, judging by Christ's standard. This involves that he must credit all others, whether they accept or reject his conclusions, with the same sincerity and devotion to truth as he himself avows. So is he bound to heed the whole Apostolic ideal above specified—"Stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong. Let all you do be done in love." LOVE. But to call any of the forms of bigotry, denunciation, persecution, and the like, *Love*, is a lie. In Christ's estimate, it is a damnable lie. Nothing can make it Christian. This section may, therefore, well conclude with the careful and deliberate avowal of Dr. J. M. Wilson :

"To be a whole-hearted evolutionist is, in a word, not inconsistent with either the habits or the hopes of religion, with prayer and worship, with effort so to study the Bible as to think of God and man more as Christ thought, and to act accordingly; nor is it inconsistent with widely diverse, intellectual, and spiritual temperaments." ¹

6. DEMOCRACY

It is impossible to survey the main features of the present age without marking the vast and unprecedented development of democracy. This term, with all that it connotes,

¹ P. 512.

is indeed inevitably bound up with politics, but is no less closely connected with religion. Here we are not directly concerned with politics, as such, but with Christianity, though these realms necessarily interpenetrate each other. Time was, we know too well, when Christianity was said to have "nothing to do but save souls" from the "eternal fire." That conception became dominant through the agency of a Church ruled by ecclesiastics who claimed to be God's only representatives.¹ Mercifully, that notion is largely dispelled, though not wholly, thanks to the persistent glamour of sacerdotalism. But the tyrannic grip of that superstition is gone for ever. In all kinds of ways, and to an ever-growing extent, Christian modernism is prevailing. The substitution of science for superstition, and of plain New Testament teaching for tradition, make the return to those old ecclesiastical delusions more impossible every year.

The religious democracy which undoubtedly obtained at the birth of Christianity, but was too soon lost in after developments, once more revived for modern times at the Reformation. Which explains why that vast upheaval is now so vilified by Romanists and Anglo-Romanists. But the democratic principle was confirmed and strengthened in this country, under the influence of Puritanism. In these days, however, the most potent factor in its development has been and is the diffusion of education. The definite step in advance which happened in 1870, has led on to immeasurable results. It is difficult to realize in our day, the times of ignorance which did formerly obtain in this land. Especially if we go back far enough in history to the period when, under the plea of the "benefit of the clergy," a criminal could escape if he could just stumble through the "neck verse" which made him a

¹ Unfortunately this is not merely past history. See footnote, p. 29.

scholar. Now, not only are all our children trained to read and write, but secondary and technical education is spreading everywhere ; so that the way is fast opening for the poor as well as the rich of the rising generation, to obtain a university training. The changes thus brought about during the last half-century are simply measureless. But they promise to be eclipsed by present-day efforts and methods, especially when the unprecedented and incalculable influence of " wireless " broadcasting is taken into account. In country and city alike, life has come to differ immeasurably from what our fathers knew. In the cities, municipal bodies are elected through the ballot-box by the votes of ordinary men and women, in a fashion never dreamed of before. Whilst in the country, not only are the hours of labour shortened by agricultural machinery, but the former tyrannies of the " parson and the squire " are moribund if not deceased ; and the humblest cottage may be in perfect touch with all the latest news of the world, by means of a " wireless set."

Meanwhile, changes in the amount and incidence of taxation are causing serious practical difficulty to many ancient houses of the " aristocracy." In a word, history is slowly but surely repeating itself. The idea of a " labour government " in these realms would have seemed, only a few years since, as impracticable and incredible as, in early Roman history, it seemed to the Patricians utterly ridiculous to think that the Plebeians would ever come into power. But there can be little doubt that the later days of the Roman Republic, when the plebeian democracy triumphed, will be repeated in the future history of humanity. Already, four of earth's greatest nations have exchanged their monarchy for a republic—which a century ago would have been deemed utterly incredible. Whilst the United States of America, with their more than 100,000,000 citizens, have now, for more than a

century, shown how a vast democracy can reach and maintain a position and influence second to none in the world of to-day, or in past history. And although in this conservative country a limited monarchy is yet likely to prevail, the limitations are as real as the monarchy; and in the actual exercise of government, Great Britain becomes more and more democratic every generation. Mr. Benjamin Kidd was thus entirely warranted in declaring, at the close of his remarkable book on *Social Evolution*, that—"The crowning event of the time is the arrival of democracy." But he might with equal truth have said more. For all the signs of the times go to show that democracy has not only come, it has come to stay, and beyond doubt has come to rule. The great means by which this modern rise to power has been brought to pass, and will undoubtedly continue, is the discovery by ordinary people, "commoners" as distinct from an "aristocracy," of the might of numbers when welded into one by combination. Manifestly, the discovery that numbers constitute such a mighty power, carries with it the increased sense of the value of the individual, from next to nothing to a potent unit, to which Christianity has so definitely contributed. Moreover, the wide extension of the franchise to include young women means, through the ballot-box, that every ordinary man and woman may play their part in the government of the country.

From this discovery arose first, Trades Unions; then larger associations; until to-day we have unequivocal threats of paralysing the whole nation's trade and life, by means of a "universal strike," unless certain demands of labour are complied with. Furthermore, combination has become so international, that in the recent lamentable coal strike more than a million pounds sterling have come into this country from abroad, to help labour to fight for its demands. Which have the juster claim, miners or

owners?—is not here the question. The matter for concern is the enormity of the power represented, and the right or wrong use of it. It has been shown, for instance, that during the year 1924 the number of labour disputes was 709, involving altogether 612,000 workpeople and a total loss of working time of 8,320,000 days. Indeed, between 1920 and 1925—so Signor Mussolini has publicly avowed—through strikes, in Europe and the United States, there were lost 200,000,000 working days, involving a definite loss of £400,000,000.

Seeing that there is no guarantee that such colossal loss and folly will not be repeated, one is driven to ask what does all this suicidal conflict really mean, and whither is civilization tending? The following brief summary of the situation is, of set purpose religious rather than political, or sociological. It will suffice, therefore, to specify a few plain principles which can scarcely be denied, seeing that they rest on the facts of ordinary daily perception.

1. When it is asked what has all this democratic development to do with the Christianity of the future, academic definitions of the term "democracy," need not much concern us. But it is well to note what so competent a writer as Viscount Bryce states, namely, that "democracy really means neither more nor less than the rule of the whole people, expressing their sovereign will by their votes." This is popularly said to be "the government of the people, by the people, for the people." In the Viscount's words—"The term is sometimes loosely used to denote a state of society, sometimes a state of mind, sometimes a quality in manners. Democracy is quite distinct from, and does not involve, Communism, or Collectivism, much less Bolshevism. Bolshevism is not a democracy at all, but a tyrannic oligarchy."

But in whatever form it is expressed, Democracy does

involve one main fundamental principle, namely, the supreme value and rights of the human individual, irrespective of age, or position, or possessions. In actual life this is now always associated with two other elements. First, the perception and avowal that these rights have been, and still are, terribly ignored in numberless cases ; and thence the urgent claim that they should be impartially acknowledged and acted on. Thus instead of saying that God made " the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate," and teaching the latter to pray :

" God bless the squire, and all his rich relations,
And teach us poor to keep our proper stations,"

he is now called upon to vote for the Labour Candidate. For he will voice their claim that every ordinary man, woman, and child, should be regarded as a unit of value equally with all the rest ; and that as such, on the plain ground of our common humanity, they should have fair opportunity to make the most and best of their lives. That is really the main principle of Democracy, whatever other shades of meaning the word may take on. •

2. This attitude is not only endorsed but emphasized by Christianity with unmistakable plainness. Its foundation principle, the universal Fatherhood of God, involves more than the ordinary humanity of the individual. In Christ's Gospel, God is represented as Father of all men, irrespective of creed, or clime, or colour ; and in that special sense " there is no respect of persons with God." This does not mean that all human beings are equal in capacity or ability. The parable of the talents is true to human life, in that some individuals are endowed with only one talent, whilst to others may be entrusted two or even five talents. But if the man with only one talent is yet responsible for the full use of it, the most elementary sense of justice would say that he ought to have every

opportunity for developing it. In that respect, for Christianity all men are equal. From the divine standpoint every human being is precious. A vivid illustration of this occurred in South Africa some years ago, when the Natal Government was busy burning down native Christian churches, under the pretext that they were but native political meeting-places where dangerous doctrines were being taught. What these doctrines really were, was explained with refreshing plainness in the *Daily Telegraph* of that date :

“ Even the proper religion is dangerous in its effect upon the childish mind of the native. He is taught that there is one Supreme Being, and that he need fear nobody and respect nobody but Him, in whose eyes the white man and the black man are as one. This is implanted in his mind as a fundamental truth, and he assimilates it in the wrong way, and instead of being humble and respectful to those who are his superiors, he considers himself their equal.”

All too well we know how the “superior” white man who scorns religion, has treated the natives not only of South Africa and the Congo, but everywhere ; including India and China, where the title of “foreign devil” was not bestowed without reason. But how truly the protests and pleas of modern Christianity on behalf of the native races, are in accord with Christ’s Gospel, from the beginning, is well expressed by Professor Oman in his reference to the Byzantine Empire :

“ The improvement in the condition of all the unhappy classes of which we have been speaking, women, infants, slaves, gladiators, can be directly traced back to a fundamental Christian truth. It was the belief in the importance of the individual human soul in the sight of God, that led the converted Roman to realize his responsibility, and change his attitude towards the helpless beings whom before he had so despised and neglected.”

3. The extent to which this main principle of democracy has been and is being applied in modern life, is too manifest

to need comment. The difficulty and perplexity from the Christian standpoint are that the vast majority of the people who are included under this term, and from its main principle derive most advantage, are apparently less and less drawn to the organized Christian Churches which most forcefully emphasize it. It is useless to deny or try to conceal the fact that in this country, as well as on the Continent and across the Atlantic, the great multitude of ordinary working people who are sometimes described as the "democracy," are increasingly content to ignore the existence of Christian Churches. No one is better qualified to form a fair estimate of this than Canon Peter Green, of Manchester; and his deliberate judgement is that the working classes are almost wholly alienated from all forms of organized religion. There are only too manifest signs that "what was passive indifference before the war, has changed to active hostility, and there is no sign of any deep revival of religion."

In his noteworthy book above mentioned, Mr. Benjamin Kidd came to a very optimistic conclusion :

"The fact of our time which overshadows all others, is the arrival of democracy. But the perception of the fact is of relatively little importance if we do not also realize that it is a new democracy. There are many who speak of the new ruler of nations as if he were the same idle demos whose ears dishonest courtiers have tickled from time immemorial. It is not so. Even those who attempt to lead him, do not yet understand him. Those who think that he is about to bring chaos instead of order, do not rightly apprehend the nature of his strength. They do not perceive that his arrival is the crowning result of an ethical movement, in which qualities and attributes which we have all been taught to regard as the very highest of which human nature is capable, find the completest expression they have ever reached in the history of the race."

But however gladly we may welcome such an estimate and desire to see it fulfilled, all that has happened since it was written has gone to show that it never will be justified on

merely rational or ultra-rational principles, apart from Christianity—the Christianity, that is, which is true to the Christ of the New Testament. What may be termed Christian democracy bases its conception of brotherhood, as stated above, on the truth of the divine Fatherhood which Jesus asserts. It insists that the great evil in all human society, whether it be aristocratic or democratic, is selfishness; and until that is overcome, there is no hope of any thorough or final betterment. The mere accession to power which now characterizes democracy, brings no guarantee at all against the evils which still blight civilization, and threaten the future with ruin. The mere possession of mighty power through the combination of numbers, is no safeguard against the drink, lust, greed, gambling, waste, frivolity, together with “envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,” which curse human society, and darken the future with the dread of further wars.

All this goes into the avowal that the greatest need of the age is the Christianization of democracy. Such a statement may seem somewhat hackneyed; but neither the virulence of some “rationalist” opposition, nor the dull indifference of the crowd, avails to lessen the truth which it expresses. The one great question is how such leavening of democracy with the doctrine and ideals of Jesus which constitute the Kingdom of Heaven, is to be brought about. The natural reply is, through the Churches. But it is too plain for words that the Christianization of democracy will never be accomplished, without the democratization of Christianity to a far greater extent than obtains at present. For that Kingdom acknowledges no aristocracy save that of noble character; it disowns all class distinctions; it has no room for a clerical caste which claims exclusive relation to God, and consequent superiority to all other men. What is really needed seems to be a return on modern lines to the early Christian

democracy which is so manifest in the New Testament, but was so soon lost, when, instead of obloquy and persecution, peace and power and possessions came to the Christian Churches. The lamentable majority of our fellow-countrymen and women who are at present so manifestly, and it is to be feared increasingly, out of touch with organized Christianity, are not likely to be won for the Kingdom of Heaven by the influence of the Churches, so long as the words of Jesus are so completely ignored in their very constitution.

“ When the ten disciples were jealous of the other two, Jesus called them unto Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones keep them in subjection. Not so shall it be among you ; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant ; and whoever sets his mind on being chief among you, shall be your slave ; even as the Son of Man came not to be waited on but to wait upon others, and give His life as a ransom for many.”

But what a repellent travesty of that ideal has been, and yet is, the priestly assumption of superiority and authority which is associated with all the extremes of rank and title and wealth, gorgeous robes and stately pomp. And yet these are apparently inseparable from ecclesiasticism. It is small wonder that a broad-minded and devoted Anglican clergyman should publicly declare that—

“ The Church is dry-rotting with ecclesiasticism, that deadliest enemy of the religion of Christ, now, as in His own day. As the Kikuyu dispute, the present Reunion impasse, and the eternal squabbles of High and Low over sacraments amply prove, our real trouble is that we have lost all sense of Gospel values ; ecclesiastical values hold the field.” ¹

There may be good reasons for the adoption of an episcopal method of Church government—in the sense in which *ἐπίσκοπος* is used in the New Testament—and no one questions that there are hundreds of devoted men in the

¹ Rev. J. R. Cohu, Rector of Aston Clinton.

Anglican Church who are called "priests." But apart from the fact that, as above stated, in the whole New Testament there is no mention of any official priest, where is there any recognition of Christ's unmistakable and unequivocal words above quoted, in a system which creates ecclesiastical dignitaries to whom in ordinary speech one must say "my Lord," or "your Grace," and who are publicly styled "the most reverend the Lord Archbishop," "the right reverend the Bishop," or "the very reverend the Dean," and the like? As for "Cardinals" and "Popes," the fulsome attitude needs no illustration. It comes indistinguishably near to the attitude of the writer of the Apocalypse concerning which—

"He saith unto me, See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book; worship God."

It is more than possible that such "priests" and dignitaries may in themselves be as humble-minded as often energetic and devoted. But the downright contradiction to Christ's injunctions remains; and the yawning gaps of assumed superiority create a hierarchy of which the New Testament knows absolutely nothing.

Nor is that all. For it is certain that the "masses," who are becoming every year more keenly critical in their democratic developments, will increasingly refuse to see in clerical assumptions any real representation of Christ's Gospel, or his ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. As a passing specimen of "a few things which must be done at once," if the "Established Church" is to be at all in accord with its modern democratic environment, the well-known Anglican organ, the *Guardian*, commenting upon Canon Peter Green's attitude, suggests that—

"Bishops must be excluded from the House of Lords, relieved of their palaces, and given a small income sufficient for a simple style

of living ; the fullest recognition must be accorded to women ; public patronage must be in the hands of lay trustees ; Church meetings must be held in the evenings."

But the bare mention of such democratic suggestions amounts, we know too well, to a counsel of perfection which is at present a mere mirage in the desert. Nevertheless, be the hindrances of caste and custom what they may, if Christianity is ever to become more than an esoteric society in the midst of a Godless world, it will only be through the work and influence of a truly Catholic Church—composed of many Churches—adapted on the lines of Christ's real Gospel, to the claims and needs of modern Democracy.

7. SOCIOLOGY

It is impossible to appreciate the modern democratic situation without giving special heed to sociology. For it is only too plain that the main principles which would prevail in a Christian democracy have been tragically contradicted in what is called Christian history ; and are painfully conspicuous by their absence in modern civilization. All history, indeed, from the first records of Egypt to this day, has exhibited the division of human beings into different classes, upper and lower, richer and poorer, freemen and slaves. Hence all the suffering and misery, the pitiful struggle and inevitable degradation, which are inseparable from the lower, poorer extremes of the conditions of existence. When one calls to mind the unmistakable spirit and teaching of Christ, together with the ideal brotherhood which necessarily follows from the divine Fatherhood which He assumed, and then faces the welter of human woe which civilization has brought to pass, the remark of Professor Seeley seems to be as sarcastic as true, that "one would think the Christian Church was here to cure all this." The Apostolic avowal that "in Christ

Jesus there is neither male nor female, [bond nor free, for all are one," is also unmistakable as to the intention of the true Gospel. Alas, although Christianity has been nominally working for nigh two thousand years, anything like the social equality which a genuine brotherhood must connote, seems to be as far off as ever.

The explanation of the comparative failure of Christianity in these respects, is only too easy to understand. After the first concrete communist attempts to realize Christian fellowship ended in fiasco, the differences in opinion and practice to which Paul's letters bear witness, resolved themselves into contending claims for spiritual superiority. When the persecutions ceased, and social standing became possible through the attitude of Constantine, the spiritual status became increasingly political, and the struggle for power developed. This association with position and power naturally encouraged the growth of an aristocracy, even within the Churches ; an upper, wealthier class, from whose privileges and opportunities the poor were necessarily excluded. The letter of James in our New Testament bears witness to this. Through the Middle Ages the supremacy of the Church, social as well as spiritual, passed on to feudal times, and kept the poor in a condition of serfdom. When feudalism merged into industrialism, the differences in wealth and social position became more and more pronounced, until, through the accumulations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they developed into what we find to-day. The noble efforts of the "Christian Socialists" under the leadership of F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and Tom Hughes, in the middle of the nineteenth century, represent the first awakening of modern Christianity to the social aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven, with the corresponding responsibilities of the Christian Church. Much has been done since then on these lines which here can neither be detailed

nor forgotten. But there can be no doubt for any honest mind, that the condition of things which still obtains, even in this nominally Christian country, is, in general, a flagrant contradiction to all that the Christ of the Gospels meant—and means—by the Kingdom of Heaven. In some undeniable respects it is a ghastly mockery of all that Christianity should stand for. No sophistry of speech or thought can possibly reconcile with the mind of Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, the outrageous, unnecessary, and cruel differences which obtain in this country—and speaking generally in other lands as well—between rich and poor, high and low, aristocracy and democracy.

Consider annual incomes alone. In openly published accounts a short time since it was shown that in Great Britain there were not a few well-known individuals with £100,000 a year; one clergyman had land worth £70,000 a year; twenty persons had more than £50,000; 240 persons had incomes between £10,000 and £50,000; whilst 517 persons had from £5000 to £10,000. It was also stated as unquestionable that—

“The annual tribute levied by seven Peers on the land values of the Metropolis were as under :

The Duke of Westminster . . .	£3,000,000
The Duke of Bedford . . .	2,250,000
Lord Howard de Walden . . .	2,900,000
Lord Portman . . .	1,890,000
Lord Northampton . . .	1,600,000
The Duke of Norfolk . . .	1,500,000
Earl Cadogan . . .	1,500,000”

Meanwhile, in the very same column in the London daily paper which announced these incomes, occurred this notice :

“The melancholy White Paper issued by the Home Office yesterday shows that no fewer than forty-six cases of death from starvation occurred last year in London alone.”

Whilst as to mode of living, which is on the whole best expressed in housing conditions, can any Christian refuse to think of the ghastly contrast between the lordly castles, splendid country residences, and fine city mansions, of the "aristocracy," and all that is connoted by such facts as these? In Leeds there are more than 72,000 "back-to-back" houses; in Bradford more than 40,000. In Glasgow there are 14,000 one-room tenancies; 22,000 two-room tenancies; with from seven to twelve persons of all ages in each case. In Sheffield, on the very day on which this was written, a case came before the magistrates—not connected with drink—in which a father and mother and ten children were living in one room. As for East London, only those who live there, know how indescribable are the conditions under which thousands of human beings are dragging on an existence. But this is not the place for a detailed tabulation of such woeful facts; it is only too true that they are the same, in proportion to the population, in every large city in the land; whilst the country has its own pitiful version of similar horrors. The real improvement in general social conditions throughout the realm—apart from strikes—does not annul the myriad tragedies represented above. It is plain that they involve the further consequence, on an unmeasured scale, that for thousands of our fellow-countrymen there is thus little opportunity or hope of making the best of this short life. Even when and where the terror of unemployment does not prevail, the conditions under which hundreds of thousands, of both sexes, live and labour, as in mines, factories, workers in iron and steel, shop assistants, and the like, are such as to preclude almost all possibility of their rising to any of those higher realms of enjoyment and opportunity, in which thousands of the aristocracy and their families continually revel.

When these and kindred facts of daily life are realized,

is it any wonder that the "masses" are discontented? Or that the "labour party" grows in magnitude and influence year by year? Surely the real wonder is that so many are content to toil on, day by day, week after week, in a monotonous drudgery which is full often associated with all that is dreary, dirty, drab, and depressing. Of a truth, the marvel concerning human nature is not its badness, but, in general, its goodness. The French and Russian revolutions have been in some respects horrible enough. But assuredly they were not without reason. There is sad ground for speaking of the curse of Bolshevism; but it cannot be denied that the tyrannies and injustice against which it was a revolt, were as wicked as they were nominally religious.

In the social unrest and labour struggles, therefore, of our day, there is every ground of reason and of right. There is no reason on earth, and certainly none in Heaven, why these wretched extremes of inequality should continue. There is no conceivable reason other than selfishness, why a minority in any nation should wallow in unearned wealth and luxury, whilst the majority have to toil hard in order to live, and are in numberless cases condemned, through no fault of their own, to an existence which would be cruelty even to the lower animals. In the words of Professor Alfred Marshall, in his *Principles of Economics*:

"Now at last we are setting ourselves seriously to inquire, whether it is really necessary that there should be any so-called lower classes at all; that is, whether there need be large numbers of people doomed from their birth to hard work, in order to provide for others the requisites of a refined and cultured life, while they themselves are prevented by their poverty and toil from having any share or part in that life."

There cannot be a moment's hesitation as to what answer to that inquiry would come, and does come, from the Jesus

of the Gospels. And in point of fact there is no natural, no human, no divine superiority, of body, mind, or character, in any aristocracy. Their superiority, whether apparent or real, in physique, intelligence, culture, is due solely to the accident of their birth and position, with the manifold opportunities therefrom accruing. Recent years have proved more than ever before, that they have no natural monopoly of any of the noblest qualities of manhood or womanhood. There is neither necessity for, nor advantage in, the present utterly unjust condition of human society. Most assuredly there is no justification of it, nor excuse for it, in the Christian Scriptures. On no grounds whatever can its gross inequalities be justified. The suffering involved is as unnecessary as cruel. The loss to humanity, nationally and internationally, is incalculable. Especially is the cruelty to children immeasurable and wicked. Every wise and worthy effort, therefore, to alter those conditions for the better, is humanly desirable and divinely inculcated. The discovery of the power of combination amongst the "common people" who are the victims of these wrongs, may well by them be regarded as a divine revelation.

3. Alas, this is all an old, old story, a veritable commonplace; there is nothing new in it. It has been the wail of the oppressed through all the ages; and the difficulties which block the way of improvement and hinder anything like a fairer division of life's possibilities of happiness, seem to be as great, as insuperable, as ever. The real root of them all is selfishness, whether aristocratic or democratic. With wealth there is the natural desire to retain the comforts and privileges their possessors enjoy; together with immeasurable temptations to pride, luxury, laziness, and callous disregard of others. Whilst amidst the poor, there cannot but develop coarseness, envy, animal passions, brutality, such as broke out into lurid flame in both the

French and Russian revolutions. In regard to the great moral evils which curse civilization, it is impossible to say whether aristocracy or democracy most engenders them. But on the just principle that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," there is certainly more excuse for the struggling and violent democrat, than for the lotus-eating, money-squandering aristocrat.¹

4. In view of all the facts which might truly be set forth but are here precluded, it does indeed seem to be sheer quixotic Utopianism, to talk about a time when there shall be a human brotherhood in which class distinctions and the cruel extremes of inequality, shall be not merely healed, but for ever prevented. The one certainty upon which we are here concerned to insist, is that such a dream never will be realized save upon Christ's principles. That is, when His second Great Command is dynamized into actuality, by human devotion to the first. In the words of the Apostle—"We love, because He first loved us."² That is the only cure for the selfishness which the *Clarion* rightly declared is the root of all our social trouble. Thus in regard to the struggle of democracy for its needs and rights, such an end could never be attained without the power which comes through combination. And power may undoubtedly be used for worthy ends. But it may equally

¹ Here is a contrast which was reported in the London Press by an actual witness of the facts. On the one hand, at high-class banquets, strawberries at 18s. a pound, Muscats at 20s.; a menu for a private party in the West End costing from £3, 10s. to £4 a head, without counting the wine. On the other hand, not miles away, the suicide of a labourer who, after pawning all he and his wife had—not for drink—had 3½d. left; out of which she bought 2d. worth of coal, and 1½d. worth of rice, to make a meal for the family. Is not the poor suicide surer of the mercy of God, than some religious fanatics who are only concerned to "save souls"? Let John vii. 53 to viii. 11 answer.

² 1 John iv. 19 (R.V.).

be abused. The possession of power seems to be so often more than human nature can bear, without selfish abuse of it. So has the discovery of this power by the proletariat opened wide the door for extravagant demands, accompanied by gross threats of violence. But force is never, at any time, a remedy for wrong. The tremendous power of the "labour movement" increases yearly, but brings with it no guarantee for its worthy, just, and unselfish use. Sir Philip Gibbs published a short time since his deliberate conviction, based on a wide experience :

"As it stands now, bewildered, demoralized, and disillusioned, swinging back fast to reactionary ideals, democracy is not equal to its task or its destiny. It must be inspired by a new philosophy of life. Democracy, the common will of common folk, believing in peace, desiring a better standard of life, ready for conciliation, loyal to fair play, not quick to quarrel, with Christian ethics, holding fast to a high code of honour, loving beauty and charity and human kindness, killing the brute in man, and looking into the light of knowledge, can alone save civilization from that downfall which is threatened. I see no other way in which civilization can be saved, no other way of escape from the danger of Europe, which is creeping close."

Such an estimate is true enough—and equally trite. For it leaves quite unanswered the same question which we have seen above Mr. Blatchford propounded in regard to Soviets. "With Christian ethics," says Sir Philip. But that is just the crux of the whole matter. It is easy enough to admire them, and say that they would suffice. But who and what is to bring them into actual operation? Surely it is just here, if anywhere, that the function of the Christian Church becomes apparent. What are Churches for, indeed, if not to bring to pass the actual application of Christian ethics to the complex and otherwise insoluble problems of sociology?

5. But as soon as this inescapable responsibility is acknowledged, three plain elements of the case loom out large :

(i) In the past, this responsibility has been almost wholly ignored and neglected, even if not definitely denied. It would be difficult to find a truer or more significant statement hereupon than that of Canon Stephen of Melbourne, in his Moorhouse Lectures. It is well worth patient thought.

"The attitude of the Church towards labour movements in the past is a third cause of the present attitude of labour towards the Church. The working man to-day reads the history of the greater part of the last century, and he looks in vain for evidence of ecclesiastical sympathy with his aspirations or his struggles. The Reform Bills were not blessed by the Bishops. Joseph Arch was denounced. Not only the methods but the aims of Chartism were preached against. Trades Unions found few, if any, advocates. Even the Factory Acts had not a tithe of the ecclesiastical support which they deserved. And all these movements originated outside the Church, and asked only, but asked vainly, for her sympathy. Where are the social reforms due to the Church as an organized body—movements in favour of justice, or freedom, or humanity? We may, of course, point to splendid examples of individual teachers who advocated reform with all their heart and soul. But the names of such men as Maurice, and Kingsley, only make more noticeable the apathy of the whole body. So that the working man may not unreasonably say—Here is a Church which teaches the duty of justice, and yet makes no effort to secure justice in social relations; which teaches that love is the fundamental virtue, and yet allows a system of absolutely selfish competition to be maintained without protest; which teaches brotherhood, but says not a word against exclusive privilege and monopolies; which teaches that all men are essentially equal, and yet acquiesces in a system which makes one class continually dependent on another."¹

The truth in such an indictment is unquestionable. In all these respects, and more, Christian Churches have woefully failed to obey the mind of the Master, or carry out their own avowed ideals of His service. The Pope has ostentatiously washed the feet of beggars, and Protestant preachers have read from pulpits what Jesus did and said as recorded in

¹ P. 165.

John xiii. But there their "brotherhood" has ended—with the exception of philanthropies which, at their best and utmost, have only been palliatives—where radical cure was needed. They have been rightly concerned about the individual and his spiritual welfare, but in their concern about his soul, they have ignored his body, as neither Jesus nor the Apostles did. In their anxiety about orthodoxy and eschatology, they have contented themselves with calling this life a "desert drear," and fixed all their hopes upon some post-mortem "Zion." In their care for the unit, they have forgotten his inseparable relations with the myriads of his fellows. There can scarcely be a more warrantable application of Christ's words—"This ought ye to have done, but not to leave the other undone." The spiritual devotion which does not merge into concern for the social atmosphere, may serve for the hereafter, but is certainly not sufficient for this world.

(ii) To a great extent, the same failure still obtains. By far the greater number of church services and preachings, both ordinary and special, are concerned only with the "spiritual condition" of the individual, and the inculcation of a holiness which is related almost wholly to the first Great Command, and to that end spends itself mostly in the observance of rites and ceremonies and sacraments. As if any "sacrament" could be more true to Him who said—"Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me"—than united Christian effort to put an end to this sort of thing—which is fact not fancy, for it is the testimony of Mr. T. Holmes, the Police Court missionary :

"To-day, 10th February, I have been sitting in the presence of two women, a widowed mother and her only daughter. Thirty-five years they have lived in the same house; thirty years the elder woman has been a widow. Thirty years she has sat at the everlasting machine, working at costumes. For eighteen years neither

mother nor daughter had known a day's respite, save when work went short, and that meant starvation. To-day they are making ladies' costumes, jacket and skirt complete—thick, dark blue cloth, green collars and green piped edging. The two machines are rattling from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.—fifteen hours those machines rattle. They earn elevenpence for each completed costume, and in the fifteen hours the two machines and two women earn 3s. 10d. ; but they have to find their own machines, and their own thread. One shilling a week is paid for the hire of one machine ; 1s. 4d. a week they pay for thread. Precious time has to be wasted by the younger woman, for she must fetch and carry the work to and from the factory. The younger woman is grey before her time ; the older is broken in health and feeble, and has to stop sometimes because the top of the machine is whirling round. Two fully paid insurance books lie on the table. There will be no parish funeral."

No—there will be undoubtedly the Master's " Well done ! " and His compensating reward on the other side. But if Christian Churches have nothing to do with the sweating curse, which is only feebly represented in its millionth part by the above—which I am not ashamed to own has blinded me with tears to quote, for I know its verisimilitude—then not only may the democracy well turn away from them in despair, but Christ's Spirit applies to them His own estimate—" Thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

That the old attitude, as indicted by Canon Stephen and the nineteenth-century Christian Socialists, is not yet converted, is only too manifest. In the late significant and influential Birmingham social conference known as " Copec," the Romish Church was conspicuous by its utter absence ; not a few Christian Churches dismissed it with a sniff of suspicion ; whilst others simply ignored it as not being sufficiently " spiritual." Even now, whilst these pages are being written, in the midst of the miserable quarrel called the " coal dispute," which has cost this country already some £300,000,000 and suffering beyond computation to women and children, those who in the

name of Christ's Spirit and sympathy have sought to bring to pass some real eirenicon, are stigmatized by the leading dignitary of St. Paul's Cathedral as "interfering parsons." What the Christ of the Gospels would say concerning that estimate, one cannot but know; even if, for charity's sake, it be left unexpressed.

(iii) The only comfort is the assurance that during the last half-century, and still more since the Twentieth Century opened, a better understanding of what the Kingdom of Heaven means, and what Christian Churches should do to help it, has come to pass, and shows every sign of worthy development. Christian Churches have become more definitely social in their sympathies, without lessening their appreciation of spiritual realities. Now, as in the past, the democracy does not look to the Churches for the formulation of a social programme which is to bring in the Millennium. Nor are Christian preachers expected, any more than qualified, to pose as experts in sociology. All that is asked is the expression of collective sympathy, whether expressed by speech or vote, with those who are working to bring to pass a nearer fulfilment of Christ's second Great Command.

It is not a light matter to ask, for much is involved. The social implications of Christ's Kingdom, quite apart from the advocacy of party politics—are no longer taboo in Christian pulpits as being outside the Gospel. Classes are formed, and study circles, for the better understanding of the problems involved, and lectures are delivered which bear directly upon modern social difficulties. Honourable mention may here be made of the Wesleyan Methodist Union for Social service, which now for twenty years has quietly but actively laboured to create a social conscience in a very conservative Church. How far it has succeeded and what more will follow, may be gauged from the inauguration of a lectureship at each annual Conference,

where some acknowledged expert will state the case from the distinctly Christian standpoint. The first of these Beckly Lectures, delivered at York this year (1926) by Sir Josiah Stamp, is on all hands welcomed as a valuable contribution to accurate and impartial thinking on the vast and complex issues which have to be faced. Both it and Copec would have been impossible a quarter of a century ago. So that real progress in the right direction may be affirmed.

There is also good hope for the future. Social evolution in general is unquestionably progressing upwards. One has but to compare social conditions now obtaining, with those of half a century ago, to be assured of that. And to speak here from the specifically Christian standpoint, in spite of the well-meant but lamentable hindrances of the Fundamentalist propaganda, the Christian conception of Christ's Kingdom and service is becoming clearer and broader every year. The influence of Jesus Himself, as portrayed in the Gospels, apart from theological differences, is immeasurable and growing. The various sections of Christianity are coming nearer to His Spirit, and therefore nearer to each other. A truly Christian Modernism is slowly but surely developing, which transcends theological conceits and ecclesiastical bigotry, and tends to unite "all who profess and call themselves Christians" in a bond of genuine co-operation for the service of humanity.

6. What then is left, in view of all the foregoing, as the supreme and pressing part for Christianity to play in seeking to win and mould the coming democracy, for its highest good, on the lines of Christ's Kingdom of Heaven? The first overwhelming certainty is an unmistakable negative. That better human day will assuredly *not* come to pass by means of some sudden celestial cataclysm. The scriptural vagaries of Bibliolatry, as witnessed in Russellism, Seventh-Day Adventism, the Pentecostal

League, and the like, may be dismissed—not, in my own case, without thorough scrutiny—as well-meant mistakes. Time only will prove, as it has proved from the First Century to the Twentieth, that these pious prognostications, however sincere, are as misleading as were Paul's in his first letter to the Thessalonians. There is no New Testament warrant for expecting any such short-cut to the coming of that Kingdom which “is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” The first of these three elements is at once the supreme benediction, the difficulty, and the hope of the future. The comprehensive sweep of *δικαιοσύνη* must not be overlooked. It may most truly be rendered “justice”; and that alone is more than all the politicians and all the governments of earth seem to be able to bring about. But the lexicon gives us a vision which is as much deeper as it is broader. “Conformity to the Divine will, in purpose, thought, and action.” Imagine that coming to pass—the actual fulfilment of the prayer that Jesus Himself has taught His disciples—throughout the world!

Then why does not the Father, of Whom He so speaks, Himself bring it to pass? In plain, simple, solemn truth, because He cannot. For “He cannot deny Himself.” He cannot by creative evolution through 100,000,000 years bring to pass a free moral being, and then treat him as the potter treats the clay. There is only one royal road to any real Millennium, and that is the way which Jesus Himself went; and the way in which He bids us, begs us, to follow Him. “If you keep My commands, you will abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commands, and abide in His love.” If for some readers, or thinkers, that sounds too “spiritual”—it will all go into one word, namely, character. Indeed, it may be quite truly expressed by an ex-Socialist and labour leader. Mr. Shaw Desmond gives his experience thus:

"Twenty years of Socialist agitation have convinced me that there is no solution for labour unrest beyond the building up of human character—a slow process, but the only process; a solution which applies not only to the working man, but equally to his employer. The ultimate factor of the labour problem is the factor of the human being himself. All social evolution turns on the fulcrum of human character. As the man is so will the system be."

It is here where, after all, the most real and most potent work of Christian Churches must come in. They can do all that can be done, either by man or God, towards the making of character. They can appeal to the human heart, as no other influence on earth can. First, by the truth of a real Gospel concerning God as represented in Jesus Christ; and then by the incarnation of that Gospel in the actual lives and characters of those who preach it. Without this practical endorsement, all the "proclaiming" of the Gospel, with all the multiplication of orthodox rites and ceremonies and services, will continue to be as socially useless in the future as they have been in the past. At a recent conference in South Wales, between certain Christian leaders and representatives of labour, one of the chief anti-Church and anti-Christian labour speakers declared that the only hope of the future for Labour, was "economic pressure—the method of the new heart was doomed to failure." On what grounds did he, could he, say that? Only on this, that the characters of those who preached the need of a "new heart," did not correspond with their avowals. But nothing less than character can really influence character. Lecky was right in the words that have been so often quoted—they cannot be too often repeated, for they are true to the uttermost. Why has the influence of Jesus been so unparalleled for good? Why does it promise to be more so with every generation? Let the Rationalist answer:

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries

has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting in all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions ; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life, has done more to regenerate and soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

"It is enough for the servant that he be as his Lord." When avowed Christian believers, both individually and collectively, so emulate their Master's example as to show in all their social relations, no less than in their own homes, the constant, tender, practical, unselfish sympathy which *they know He would do*, then—and not till then—will the great suffering, sorrowing, sinning, bewildered world of mankind now outside the Churches, turn to them for guidance and help, towards bringing to pass that better day which the champions of "Labour" dimly visualize as a "new social order." Their hopes are fashioned on materialistic lines ; but Jesus included more than all their best conceptions, in His higher, deeper, broader, nobler ideal of the "Kingdom of Heaven" on earth. It rests with the Christianity of the future to show a sceptical world what would really be the answer to the prayer so hackneyed by ceaseless verbal repetition—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

8. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

In any survey of present-day Christendom, it is impossible to avoid noticing the many differences in organization which characterize the various Christian Churches. The unchristian and unworthy bigotry of some sections of Catholic Christianity, such as is displayed in the Greek, Roman, and "Anglo-Catholic" Churches, by their respective claims to be the only true "Catholic" Church,

with contempt for all others, may be dismissed as mere ecclesiastical arrogance. The sufficient estimate and reply to it all are found in the rebuke of Jesus Himself—Mark ix. 38-40. The echoing confirmation of that rebuke is plain enough for all time, in Paul's letter to the Romans (ch. xiv.). Neither as to creed nor organization, is there any fixed standard to which all must conform in order to be Christian. The lofty denunciations of ecclesiasticism in regard to "schism," are as insignificant as the gibes of unbelief at the number of differing "sects." In the sight of the Father of Whom Jesus spoke and the Apostle wrote, it matters not how many sections of believers there are, so long as they are true to the ideals expressed in the Apostolic letter just mentioned (Rom. ii.). The special deference which the Romish Church professes for Peter, ought to make its representatives more attentive to his unmistakable and unlimited avowal :

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said—Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that fears Him and works righteousness, is acceptable to Him." ¹

The Apostle would have been amazed and indignant indeed, had he been assured that in following ages all who did not obey the dictates of a narrow-minded hierarchy, would in his name be threatened with "eternal damnation." The strong language of Paul at the commencement of his letter to the Galatians, which ecclesiasticism sometimes quotes in defence of its uncharity, really tells with emphasis in the opposite direction. For it was the Apostle's intense plea against the narrowness of the Jewish converts who would have excluded from the Christian Church all that were not circumcised. So that the strength of the Apostolic warning was called forth, not on behalf of bigotry, but against it.

Here, however, we must take for granted in regard to

¹ Acts x. 35.

doctrine, what has been stated above, and concern ourselves only with the methods of Church organization. These are certainly of real importance, and cannot but have great influence in the future development of Christianity. The whole question may be best surveyed from three standpoints. We will briefly consider what has been, what is, and what ought to be.

1. As regards the past. From the very beginning, Christianity, as a living and growing faith, was obliged to adopt some kind of organization. The fellowship of a common belief brought many into constant and close communion, so that some arrangement had to be made for the conduct of their united services, and the perpetuation of their existence as distinct Christian Churches. According to the New Testament these arrangements were at first very simple. Whilst the Apostles lived, they naturally took the precedence; but the only "orders" which they left behind them for the guidance of the Churches, were elders and deacons, with men and women on equal footing as Christian workers. The special exclusion of women from public speaking (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35) in the Corinthian Church is partly explained—as intimated above—by the dangerous environment in that city, and partly as a relic of the writer's Rabbinic training. So far as general constitution of the Christian Churches was concerned, there was nothing approaching the complicated system of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, enveloped in all the glamour of sacerdotal superiority, with unique rights, powers, and privileges, which developed all too soon after their departure. The terms employed to signify these offices in the New Testament are simple enough. *ἐπίσκοπος* does indeed mean Overseer or Superintendent; but it was always and only in the sense of *primus inter pares*. Never was there, in connection with such an office, anything like the modern superstitious glamour which surrounds "the most reverend

the Lord Archbishop." If such adulation had been offered to an Apostle or any of his co-workers, we know well, from all the letters of the New Testament, how emphatically they would have repudiated it. Paul's own fullest statement of the respect due to himself and his fellow-office-bearers, is much more affectionate than authoritative (1 Thess. v. 12, 13); and contains no trace of hierarchical supremacy. The same applies to the two other offices of *πρεσβύτερος* and *διάκονος*. Of these, the former, which simply means an elder, never did mean "priest" in any sense, much less in its later sacerdotal connotation. No such office is mentioned anywhere in the whole New Testament. The term *ἱερεύς*, which might imply such significance, never once occurs in reference to any office-bearer; its only reference to Christians occurs in the book entitled *Revelation*, where it is thrice applied to all believers without distinction. So little original Christian warrant is there for the name which Anglicanism, following in the wake of Rome, has made the ordinary term for the Christian Ministry. The fact that numbers of devoted clergymen repudiate any sacerdotal claims in its employment, is unfortunately more than counterbalanced by the multitude of those who insist upon them. There is no question that in popular understanding, a "priest" is a member of a sacerdotal caste, endued with special prerogatives and powers of which the New Testament knows nothing.

The history of the early Christian Church shows only too plainly how, even in the midst of the new-found faith, human nature soon asserted itself, and the primitive brotherhood of co-workers became gradually an ambitious hierarchy. But in our own time Dr. Headlam, himself an Anglican Bishop, has frankly acknowledged that the modern episcopal system cannot be derived from the New Testament. Nor is there any reply to Bishop Lightfoot's demonstration, half a century ago, that the Christian

ministry, as outlined in the Gospels and Epistles, has nothing to do with the ecclesiastical priesthood. As for the "Apostolical Succession," on which Romanists and some Anglicans lay such stress, it was unanswerably shown by Mr. Powell, long since, to be an historical delusion. The special plea on behalf of sacerdotal claims is that the Christian faith does not rest upon the New Testament, but upon the traditions of the "Fathers," and the decisions of Councils. But even if that were true—which certainly it is not—it would be of no avail for the intended purpose. For whatever were the ecclesiastical developments of the first three centuries, at least they rested avowedly upon the Gospels and Epistles as then known. Even Cyprian, the highest of ancient "high" churchmen, dared not ignore or contradict them. When, therefore, it is seen that modern episcopacy—in Europe, at all events—involves sacerdotalism with all its implications as to priesthood and Apostolical succession, the appeal to early Christian traditions on its behalf, simply asks these to contradict themselves as well as the New Testament. The episcopacy which grew into the Papacy, is as far from the mind of Christ as night from day. Pitiful proof of this is manifest in the contemptuous arrogance which still characterizes such organs as the *Tablet*, the *Universe*, and the *Church Times*. The warning of the Apostle whom Rome so professes to honour, succinctly expresses at once the real heresy and sinister history of that Church, even to this hour; whilst showing how far from endorsing Romish claims was the Apostle himself.

"The elders, therefore, among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder—tend the flock of God—not of constraint—nor yet for filthy lucre—neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock."¹

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1-3.

The Protestant Reformers pleaded for something nearer to the Apostolic ideal. That such a plea does not necessarily preclude an episcopal system, is well illustrated in America, where the Methodist Episcopal Church is one of the strongest pillars of the Protestant faith. But it did and does mean the purging of episcopacy from ecclesiastical pride and sacerdotal assumptions. Just as, in this country, there are very many Evangelical Anglican clergymen to whom episcopacy seems to be the best method of Church government. To such preference they have every right. The only thing that one cannot help marking and regretting, is the undue stress which such a system seems inevitably to put upon what are called "orders," in the Christian ministry. From this it results that Bishops are lifted upon lofty pedestals; seated in the House of Lords; invested with almost autocratic powers; provided for on what, to the popular eye, cannot but seem a luxurious scale; and referred to with fulsome adulation for which there is neither Christian warrant nor sensible reason.

There is indeed no Christian reason whatever why such "clergymen"—or any Christian "minister" or pastor—should be marked out in public by some special dress. Nor any need whatever, in Christian worship, for many-coloured robes or gorgeous display. These elaborate and spectacular trappings are said to be "symbolic," and reverential. But from the viewpoint and example of Christ Himself and His Apostles—and it would seem also from the standpoint of common sense—they are at best childish, and belong rather to Paganism than to Christianity. There is also—human nature being what it is—no small inducement to personal pride and popular externalism, instead of what Jesus made so clear and so emphatic to the poor Samaritan woman. Meanwhile, judged practically, the Episcopal system is a pitiful failure, in that Vicars, Rectors, Incumbents, Curates, without number, who do the real work

of the "Established Church," are largely underrated, often quite ignored, generally underpaid, and sometimes half-starved.

To say all this carefully and deliberately, from definite knowledge, concerning episcopacy, does not imply that the more democratic system which prevails in the Free Churches is by any means perfect. The diaconate of Congregational and Baptist Churches, the Church Court of Presbyterian Elders, and the Methodist Conference, are all avowedly democratic. But in practical working, these democracies become largely, and almost inevitably, oligarchies. The possession of a vote by each member in a church meeting does indeed seem democratic enough. But there are many ways in which that vote may be modified, or even counteracted, by personal influence. Moreover, whilst the Free Church systems are free from unwarranted and superstitious adulation of the Christian Ministry, it is more than possible, in some cases, that a cruel contrast to the Apostle's exhortation to the Thessalonians may be practised. Very much may depend upon the personality of the pastor, or preacher, as to how the Church regards him. But cold disregard is certainly no more in accord with the mind of Christ than fawning obsequiousness. Human nature in general remains the same to-day as in the early Christian centuries, and we know too much of the conflicts which then arose concerning differences of opinion and belief. Thus to-day, when similar differences arise, the advantages of an organized system, whether episcopal as in Anglicanism, or non-episcopal as in Methodism, become manifest. In these cases an appeal to external help and authority is possible; whereas in the Congregational or Baptist communities, each church is so self-contained and exclusive, that no reference can be made to any larger and more impartial judgement. If each church were wholly composed of true saints, and the

ideal Christian spirit prevailed, such isolated churches might be perfect. But as they are not, things sometimes happen which are as contrary to Christ's intention as anything in Romish or Anglican Churches. Here, as in social life, the democratic principle is impracticable without thorough loyalty to Christ's law of love.

On the whole, after fifty years' experience, one may perhaps be permitted to say, without any reflection upon other systems, that the Methodist method of Church government, though far from claiming perfection, seems to come very near to the Christian ideal. Its democratic evolution during the last fifty years has well illustrated the law of adaptation to environment. In no section of the Catholic Church is any member more sure of sympathy as well as justice. Whilst the ministers, although under the authority of a Conference, are never in fear of unfair treatment. The highest officials are regarded as on precisely the same level of brotherhood as the least known Circuit minister. Whilst the itinerant system which arranges for a change of sphere, in all ordinary cases, every three years, provides an appointment for every man who does his best, and gives opportunity for readjustment if necessary. It also supplies all the stimulus of new beginnings, and welds men together into a solidarity of ministerial brotherliness which is unparalleled in modern Christendom. Such a brotherhood has all the advantages of episcopacy, without the dangers of an unduly exalted bishopric, or an unwarranted priesthood.

2. As to the present condition of Christendom in these respects. No word in all the New Testament has been more misquoted—even by those who could not but know better¹—than John x. 16. There, through the misrendering of the "Authorized" Version, English people have been misled for three hundred years. For Jesus never did say

¹ As, for instance, Lord Halifax, at E.C.U. meetings.

that there should be "one fold" under one Shepherd. The Revised Version has indeed now corrected it. But even apart from the mistranslation, the preceding context ought to have prevented such a misrepresentation of Christ's intention as the preposterous and persistent claim of Rome to be that "one fold" apart from which there could be no "salvation." The attitude of the late Bishop of Zanzibar was pitiful enough, in its disregard of the Free Churches. But the Anglo-Romanism which he represented, is hoist with its own petard when it turns appealingly Romeward. For the Romish paper, the *Tablet*, shows such suppliants unmistakably cold shoulder when it says :

"With the delusions of those who believe they have the priesthood, and the fulness of sacramental life, *when they have nothing of the kind*, we must as theologians be unsparing ; but as men we can be kind." ¹

Such an attitude is plainly as hopeless as unchristian ; but the fact has to be faced that it is endorsed by myriads. Even if theological differences between all the varied sections of Christendom were as small as they are great, it is beyond doubt that there is no prospect whatever of all Christian believers being welded together into one religious organization. It only remains to ask what is the significance of these irreconcilable differences of belief and practice, in view of coming years ?

3. The first great principle to be maintained is that organic union between all Christian Churches, which is manifestly impossible, is also unnecessary and undesirable, alike for the service of God and man. To a certain extent, where there is much similarity of conviction and of practical ideals, as between the various sections of Methodism, it may be useful to draw together into one body, for the sake of efficiency and economy, together with the intensifying of a real Christian brotherhood. But the prolonged discussions and persistent opposition which have characterized

¹ *Italics mine.*

even such a purpose, show plainly the impossibility of accomplishing any unity which approaches uniformity. But the answer to the query—What can be done to bring about a Christian unity real enough to move modern democracy from alienation to sympathy and conviction?—is as simple in itself, as it is difficult for human nature. What *ought* to be done—assuming that all the various Churches, larger or smaller, accept the truth and authority of our New Testament records—is to blend the liberty and love of the two passages in Paul's letters which we know as Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. xiii. If these are not “inspired” and authoritative, Christian faith is mere delusion. But if they do truly represent the mind of Christ, then that blending constitutes the very essence of Christian character, and the significance of Christianity to modern democracy. Compared with the production, of that character, all else in Christian creed and practice is, one is bound to repeat, what the Apostle so emphatically pronounced it—“nothing.” Creeds, standards, rituals, sacraments, rubrics, forms of government, methods of worship, are comparative trifles. At best and most they are but channels, which, without the Christlike character, are as mockingly useless for the purposes of His Kingdom, as would be the finest water-pipes from some vast reservoir to any city if the water itself did not flow through them. All the signs of the times go to show that with the resistless growth of democracy, succeeding generations will care less and less for all the shells of religion, and more for the kernel. So far as the assumptions of ecclesiasticism are concerned, the plain truth has recently been spoken by an able and devoted Anglican clergyman: ¹

“The sacerdos, therefore, is becoming a fast-diminishing species. He is not adapted to the modern environment, and soon, in mentally

¹ Rev. R. Meiklejohn, B.D., LL.B.

progressive countries, he will be as extinct as the dodo. The Reformation swept away for ever the old conception of a magical mediatorial priesthood, and abolished that exaggerated sacerdotalism which owed its existence to an unreal sacramentalism. This organizing, mechanical priesthood, is actually destroying the spiritual vitality of the Church, and alienating more deeply than ever the democracy who are attracted by Christianity but repelled by Churchmanship."

Clericalism is not, indeed, confined to the Roman or Anglican Churches ; but wherever it grows, it is a noxious weed, and not a living branch of the true Vine. The question whether modern democracy will ever be Christianized, is not a matter of creed, nor of Church government, but of the embodiment in each Church and every individual of the principles in which the Apostle summarized the Gospel he proclaimed. Even such as these : (i) Let each man, and each Church, seek for the truth to the uttermost, and be faithful to what they find. (ii) Let each man and each Church credit those who differ from them, with doing the same. (iii) For that very reason, let them learn to "love" each other, in the full sense in which both Jesus Himself and the Apostles used that term. (iv) Beyond that, let all value-judgements be left with God. When such earnest seeking for truth and love¹ bring to pass such a unity, then it will be easy to join hands and

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 1. One is at a loss to understand how the late Revisers could be content with the miserable travesty of what the Apostle wrote, in their perpetuation of the A.V. rendering—"follow after love." A pitiful and misleading blunder which is at the root practically of all Christian failures. As if love could be learned and practised by merely "following after" it! Even Moffatt's rendering is not nearly so true to the sense of διώκετε as Dr. Weymouth's—"Be eager in your pursuit of this love." Liddell and Scott's plain statement gives the real significance—"To pursue for the purpose of catching, to chase, hunt, in war or in hunting." Are there many Christians in all the Churches, who so practise Christ's word herein—"Seek, and you will find"?

hearts for the sake of mankind, in all noble and unselfish service, according to the teaching and example of Him whom all Christians call "Lord and Master." And that is the only faith for which God cares, or by which the modern Democracy will be influenced.

9. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

Enough has been said in preceding pages, as to the impossibility of organic union or uniformity of creed or practice, between the various Churches which, with their adherents, constitute Christendom. But much remains to be seen and said, in regard to the possibilities of general good which might result from keeping "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." The ancient heresy that Christianity is only here to "save souls" from an everlasting hell, has been sufficiently exploded to clear the ground for a more true, and present, and practical, appreciation of what Jesus meant by His own proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was "at hand," and by the prayer which He has put for ever into the hearts as well as lips of His disciples—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth." But apart from all the tragedies of "two thousand troubled years," it is pitifully, woefully manifest, that that prayer is yet a long, long way from its needed fulfilment. The whole procedure of that remarkable Conference at Birmingham already alluded to, on Christianity and Sociology, known as "Copec," testified unmistakably to the two main matters for consideration. These have become platitudes by inevitable reiteration. But platitudes, in this as well as in so many other respects, are just realities which most utterly deserve the thorough appreciation of which familiarity robs them. In the present case they are : (i) The emphatic need, throughout all modern society, of those forces that make for righteous-

ness which Christianity represents. (ii) The difficulty of securing and applying the dynamic which Christian Churches undoubtedly incarnate, in the direction which modern civilization most needs.

This latter problem is on a par with the persistent effort in modern physics, to discover how to harness the enormous stores of energy latent in the ultimate atom. Though, as Sir Oliver Lodge well says, the question what we should do with such enormous powers, is one which may well give us pause. In the case of the vast powers latent in a unified Christianity, the difficulty is rather how to secure them, than what to do with them. For we are our own witnesses as to the two-sided estimate which must be formed when we honestly survey our modern environment. The former popular fallacy about the "good old days" has been justly killed by facts, and buried unlamented in a forgotten grave. But the living foes to human happiness and national well-being remain all too real and vigorous. One has not to be a pessimist to sigh over the list of evils enumerated above. In some form or degree, they fester like foul wounds, in every city and every township throughout the country. We might even turn to the frightful list which Paul gives in his letter to the Galatians (v. 19, 20) as the "manifest works of the flesh" in his day, and ask which of them have the intervening years of civilized "progress" extinguished? And the tragic answer must be—Not one. In common honesty we have to own that a modern list is no less true and terrible. Drink, lust, greed, gambling, waste, laziness, frivolity, brutality, dishonesty, cruelty, jealousy, "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness"—all these, it is said, may be comprised under the one dire word, "selfishness." That may indeed, as we have already acknowledged, be the root of the deadly upas tree; but the branches differ widely in size and shape.

The Gospel of Christ, we know well, were it accepted and heeded, would lay the axe of the second Great Command at the very root of the tree of evil. But that involves a definite personal "acceptance of Christ," which must be left to the individual conscience and conviction. In regard to such conviction, each human being must be left, as we have seen above, to fulfil the Apostolic principle—"Let every man be clearly convinced in his own mind." But if it be, alas, unthinkable, that the whole of the dire list just enumerated cannot be swept away by radical destruction, surely it were a benediction if some, at least, of the branches of the poison tree, could be so cut off that they would never grow again. Think for one earnest moment what kind of a country this would be if, say, the first four of the devilries specified above, were so destroyed from out our British midst. No man with a character to lose will dare to question the immeasurableness of such a contribution to "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." But how to compass such an end—"aye, there's the rub." The way is blocked, we know too well, by the incalculable persistence of sheer animal passion.

As for the drink evil—it seems useless to increase the already innumerable and unanswerable witnesses to the evils, physiological as well as social and criminal, which result from the mad foolery of a nation's annual spending of £300,000,000 in alcoholic liquor. Modern science has uttered its verdict, now, unequivocally. In the words of the late Sir William Osler—than whom a more competent authority never lived—if all the beer and spirits this country consumes were dumped into the sea, it would be vast gain to the people, "but it would be very bad for the fishes." Two reasons, and two only, remain to perpetuate this ancient evil: (i) A passing tickle in the throat, an utterly delusive sense of warmth, accompanied by a muddling giddiness, constitute the reward of the drinker. (ii) Whilst

the payments for his drink which, in the aggregate, amount to the millions of pounds in "vested interests," are what the licensed victualler has in view. So do these two, sensation and money-making, herein set at defiance every call to health, wealth, and nobler self-development.

Meanwhile, all the sneers and jeers, and lies [*sic*] of "the trade," do not avail to hide the unmeasured gain which is coming increasingly to the great nation across the sea, which had the courage to take this monster by the throat—the only kind of reasoning to which he is open. Why does not this country do the same? Could we also not put £300,000,000 to better use? Impossible; impracticable; contrary to national feeling; not British; and the like, are all raucously shouted in our ears. But what if "all who profess and call themselves Christians" were one, in such redemptive crusade as might be expected from the Gospel they allege?

The same applies to the other curses of humanity such as lust, and greed, and gambling, which neither need be nor can be described here in their gruesome detail. But their evil influence is immeasurable. It may be too much to suppose that all these radical vices of civilization could be wholly extirpated, even if all the Churches were really one in harmony and in effort. But at least it is certain that they might do much to lessen such evils; no man can say how much. The "works of the flesh" would undoubtedly be greatly checked, and the "fruit of the Spirit" stimulated beyond measure.

At present, such a maximum and optimum seem to be far removed. Happily, there are unmistakable signs of a closer *rapprochement* than heretofore. The remarkable Copec Conference was, in this respect, epoch-making. With the one conspicuous exception, all the Churches of any repute were represented. But the open refusal of Romanism to participate, was only typical of much more,

less pronounced but no less real, ecclesiastically narrow isolation. The two main suggestions towards such unity of spirit as would lead on to united action in other matters, are apparently as yet far from acceptance. Interchange of pulpits, and inter-Communion services, are still taboo. The letter of Lord Phillimore to the Archbishop of York a few years since, conveying the protest of the E.C.U. against Dr. Jowett's preaching in Durham Cathedral, speaks volumes :

"Is it yet too late for Your Grace to exert your great authority and exhort your eminent Suffragan to refrain from so disorderly, and I might add, so suicidal a course. I need not dwell upon the consequences which such an opening of the floodgates of lawlessness may be expected to bring about. I feel sure Your Grace knows them too well."

When one puts that attitude side by side with the teaching and spirit of Jesus in the Gospels, is it any wonder that modern democracy should be alienated from such narrow-minded Christianity? It is, however, no less a matter for thankfulness to know that the Bishop of Durham maintained his ground, and that Dr. Jowett did preach a truly Gospel sermon in that Cathedral. Moreover, in regard to the demand for re-ordination on the part of Free Church ministers, before taking any part in an Anglican service, the Bishop, with Christian courage, wrote to *The Times* to the effect that—

"To accept re-ordination would in the case of every non-episcopally ordained minister, immerse him in grave sin, and bind him to the service of grave error. There is no possibility of Reunion, unless the demand for re-ordination be frankly and finally abandoned."

It is probable that the popular—and somewhat opprobrious—distinction in this country between a "clergyman" and a "minister," will continue as long as the Anglican section of the Church Catholic remains "established." But that there need not be any unchristian or unkind

feeling, is happily borne out now in numberless cases, of which the following, just reported, may serve as a fair specimen :

“ A welcome instance of amicable co-operation between Church and Chapel has just been furnished in the Cambridgeshire village of Guilden Morden, where a friendly feeling has long prevailed. The vicar has issued to the parish an official notice that—In consequence of the festival at the Congregational Church on Sunday, 26th September, our evening service will be held in the afternoon at three o'clock, and there will be no evening service at six.”

All who are acquainted with the noble Christian work carried on by the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, at St. Martins-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, will recognize in his whole attitude the same truly Christlike spirit. When the late Dr. Clifford was present at one of the Communion services in that church, Mr. Sheppard publicly welcomed him, with kind words of brotherly appreciation of his lofty Christian character and service. *O si sic omnes!* The worth and influence of such unity of spirit in actual conflict with evil would do more, if universally prevalent, than all the services or sermons of all the Churches in the land.¹

¹ The two sides of the case are illustrated by these two announcements in the Press just issued, for the same date :

“ A Wilts correspondent, writing to *The British Weekly*, tells the miserable story of the refusal to allow a United Methodist minister to conduct a funeral service for one of his members in a village churchyard. The Vicar said he had no power to give his permission, but must consult the Precentor of the Cathedral—who refused ! There is nothing more pitifully tragic than to carry exclusiveness and intolerance into ‘ God’s Acre,’ which, after all, is the common possession of the whole of the parishioners.”

“ An interchange of pulpits between leading Anglicans and Free Church ministers, on a scale rarely attempted anywhere, is being arranged in Birmingham for 7th November, the Sunday nearest Armistice Day. Among interesting fixtures it is noted that Carrs Lane pulpit is to be occupied by Canon T. Guy Rogers, the rector of Birmingham, whose place at St. Martin’s will be filled by Dr. W. F.

The differences of theological opinion, order of worship, form of government, might be as real as between the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and air force, during the late war. But their very differences of weapons, training, and duty, did but illustrate their unity in loyalty and service. And victory was not attained until all the indescribable unlikenesses of the allied forces were united under the one command of Marshal Foch. Surely there ought to be no need to reaffirm the one leadership of the true Catholic Church. Can the truth herein be better expressed than by the broad-minded Anglican clergyman before mentioned.¹

“ Christ’s Church, I take it, is a society, a fellowship, a brotherhood of men full of His spirit, and carrying on His work. What is the spirit of Christ and what is His work ? To put it briefly, Christ stands for the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, and goodness through the Spirit ; Christ’s one aim is the establishment of God’s Kingdom of peace and goodwill here on earth.”

If only such a conception of the Church and its commission possessed the minds and ruled the hearts of all the avowed Christians in these realms—preachers, pastors, office-bearers, and people alike—the Kingdom of Heaven would indeed be “ at hand,” and the whole world would know it.

One special hindrance to such a consummation, already mentioned, ought perhaps to be here more fully considered, namely, the extent to which woman’s work comes into

Lofthouse, of Handsworth Wesleyan College. Canon Cole will be at Hampstead Road Baptist Church, while Rev. F. C. Spurr will preach for him at Aston Parish Church. Canon Richards, the Archdeacon of Aston, will be at Hagley Road Baptist Church, and Rev. J. Ivory Cripps, Area Superintendent of the Baptists, will be at St. John’s, Sparkhill, a popular Anglican Church, which for some years has made a practice of inviting Free Church people like Mrs. Cadbury, Rev. S. W. Hughes, and Rev. Leyton Richards to conduct its special services. Needless to say, local militant Anglo-Catholics at least shrug their shoulders at these unorthodox proceedings.”

¹ Rev. J. R. Cohu, Rector of Aston Clinton.

such an actual and acting fellowship. During recent years, especially since the rise and growth of the Salvation Army, the extent to which women can render public service in the Church, and for Christ's Kingdom, has been much more widely recognized. But it has been in the Free Churches, not in the Anglican or Romish Church. These latter are quite content, in spite of the Romish cult of "Our Lady," to allow woman only a private and subordinate position in Christian service. There is no prospect of alteration in that ecclesiastical estimate. But it is even more sure that the Free Churches, following the Society of Friends, will never again consent to such limitation. By way of helping on a better understanding, it may be well to state the whole case succinctly, in the light of the New Testament, and on modern lines.

(i) By long-established custom women have been excluded from the Christian Ministry, and in general from any public religious function. As to the Anglican Church, a few years since, the Lower House of Convocation refused to entertain a proposal "that it should be allowable for women to speak and pray in consecrated buildings," on the ground that—

"In view of the statements of St. Paul on the subject, as to the uniform practice of the Church in the past, it is not desirable to grant the proposed permission."

The great objection of some of the ecclesiastics was, that—
 "If they answered, Yes, women would have to be admitted preachers to mixed congregations, and as priests as well."
 So at the Salisbury Diocesan Conference the Earl of Shaftesbury moved :

"That this Conference views with grave concern the inception of a practice of extending invitations to women to speak in the pulpits of our Churches, and urges the Bishops to take such action as would bring this practice to an end."

After what has been said above, the reference to "priests" and the priesthood, may be dismissed as meaningless for the Free Churches. But Mr. Bouchier, from the pulpit of St. Jude's in Hampstead Gardens, went further, in declaring that—

"Women are not capable of the grace of Holy Orders. The door which admits women to the Ministry, will also provide the exit for all self-respecting men."

So far from the Christian principle, that—

"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" ¹—

has ecclesiastical pride been content to depart.

(ii) There is no spiritual, moral, intellectual, warrant for such an assumption of woman's inferiority, or her exclusion from Christian service. Upon the attitude described above, a leading journal has well remarked that—

"If such a barbed-wire fence remains round the Church, so much the worse for the Church. Whatever doubts there might be as to the fitness of women for the secular field as doctors, scholars, teachers, barristers, legislators, and so on, there can be none as to their peculiar equipment for spiritual tasks. They have a genius for service; they have in an infinitely larger measure than men, the sense of spiritual life, and their gifts of eloquence have made Johnson's gibe about women preachers, a monument of foolishness. If the Church is perishing, it is perishing, not, as Mr. Bouchier said, because parsons are not masculine enough, but because it is the last refuge of the antiquated doctrine that it is a men's club with barbed-wire entanglements, to keep out the women from its holy places."

In these days it is much too late to question the capacity of women for public service as doctors, legislators, and barristers, for there are conspicuous and ever-increasing

¹ Gal. iii. 28.

examples to the contrary. The acumen displayed by Lady Astor and Miss Margaret Bondfield in the House of Commons, is quite equal to that of any male "Hon. Member." Whilst few men can equal, and none excel the platform powers of Mrs. Philip Snowden—to say nothing of the versatile Mrs. Besant. As to preaching, it would be difficult to find half a dozen men, either in the Anglican or the Free Churches, equal to Miss Maude Royden in pulpit power; and there are none superior. Whilst as to pleading with a "mixed" congregation on Christian lines, there are hundreds of Salvation Army women "officers" who are more than equal to any ordained Missioner. It was no less an authority than the Dean of St. Paul's who recently said at a public luncheon, that from what he had seen at the Church Assembly of England, there were many women more qualified to adorn the episcopal bench, than those who occupied it at the moment.

(iii) The attitude of Paul may certainly be over-estimated. It is unquestionably partly explained, as stated above, by his early Rabbinic training, other traces of which are plain enough in his writings. But as regards his letter to Corinth (1 Cor. xiv. 34–36), which is always so stressed in this connection, it is largely accounted for on the same principles as his praise of celibacy in the same letter (vii. 26); namely, the special environment of temptation and danger in a great city such as Corinth. The assumption, moreover, that what Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church, thereby became a law for the universal Church for evermore, is by no means warranted. After all, the letters of Paul have to be interpreted by the mind of Christ; and there is nothing whatever in His attitude towards women which warrants their being relegated to a realm of spiritual inferiority as compared with men. His choice of twelve men as itinerant evangelists is perfectly explained on other lines.

(iv) Stress is generally laid upon the comparative physical disability of women for public work. But does this really apply to them any more than it does to men? Assuredly some men are not physically qualified to preach, or speak in public; but it would be poor logic to argue from that fact that no man is qualified. When recently, the question of woman's ministry came up at the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, the main objections were rather practical than spiritual. Especially in regard to the possibility of marriage. This was generally regarded as a final objection; so that if previously a woman had been taking the usual minister's part, she must resign it on being married. But this again surely depends upon the special circumstances of each case. Certainly Mrs. Booth's devoted public work—and she was confessedly a better preacher than her husband—did not prevent her bringing up her large family in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." There are many cases known to Methodism, at all events, in which the wife's ministrations have been quite as acceptable as the husband's.

(v) On the whole, the noble work of the Salvation Army, and the quiet but ceaseless witness of the Society of Friends, have amply justified their employment of woman's service on equal terms with that of their men. Inasmuch as neither of these sections of the Catholic Church have recourse to Sacraments, the suggestion arises that after all it is the question of "administering" these, which causes the greatest opposition or hesitation concerning the full ministry of women. As the New Testament knows nothing of any "administration," nor of the "priesthood" which it implies, this objection, however conventional, may be dismissed on Christian principles. Whatever one may think of the somewhat antiquated theology which pervades some of the Salvation Army utterances, no one with any Christian sympathy can help admiring the

self-forgetting devotion with which, in all weathers and under all discouragements, the band of Salvation Army women join with the men, in bringing Christian appeals to places where otherwise they would never be heard. Such devotion of a Salvation Army lass, we are bound to say, on Christ's authority, is as acceptable in God's sight as the exalted service of any Archbishop that ever lived or will live.

(vi) In a word, there is nothing really opposed to the full use in the Church of all the capabilities of women, except ecclesiastical tradition. This is fairly represented herein by Mr. Bouchier—no doubt speaking also for others :

“ The priesthood is a vocation not a profession. No use, therefore, to cite what women have done in other spheres. Good luck to them as doctors, lawyers, and Members of Parliament. But—hands off the Church. Against the bare idea of seeing her usurping an office plainly denied to her by God, my whole soul revolts.”

Seeing, however, that the New Testament knows nothing whatever about any such “ priesthood,” nor yields the least warrant for the assertion that the highest service in the Church is, to women, “ denied by God,” such dogmatism does but illustrate what has just been said, and merits only the remark that Christianity does not rest upon ecclesiastical tradition, but upon the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ. A recent deliberate statement by Bishop Gore in his volume *Belief in God*, is refreshing, and may be commended to many others :

“ I have, ever since I was an undergraduate, been certain that I must be in the true sense a free thinker ; that either not to think freely about a disturbing subject, or to accept ecclesiastical authority in place of the best judgement of my own reason, would be for me an impossible treason against the right. I must go remorselessly where the argument takes me.”

There could scarcely be a better comment on the plain

word of Jesus—"Yea, and why even of yourselves do you not judge what is right?"¹

Seeing, however, that Romanists and "High" Anglicans must be credited with sincerity, no less than Protestants, it is evident that a breach exists herein which will not for a long time, if ever, be healed.

The most that can be done by way of helping on the utmost practical fellowship between the Churches that thus differ, is to call their attention more earnestly to the growing strength of the modern forces that block the way of Christian progress. There is not the least leaning to pessimism in pointing out that the evils briefly mentioned above are so radical, so widespread, so potent, so persistent, that in seeking to oppose them, free lancing, whether by individuals or isolated churches, is simply useless. The moral evils of civilization are too strong to be hopefully met by anything short of united effort, on the part of all who feel any real sympathy with the ideals and purposes of Jesus.

Here is room, undoubtedly, for other graces of the Christian character than courage and devotion. Such maxims as—"Let each esteem the other better than himself"—"In honour preferring one another"—are as difficult to practise as they are easy to recite. Yet even the recent horrible war should teach Christians something. By all consent, victory only came through the unification of all the allies, under Marshal Foch. But was it an easy thing for all the heroic leaders and soldiers of the other commands—British, American, Australian, Canadian, Belgian—to sink their own plans and obey the dictates of a French Commander? Such self-effacement would be harder to some brave men, than the fight to retain any salient. In Christian service nothing is or can be more precious to a devoted worker, than his own convictions, his own plans, and his own methods. But unless he is

¹ Luke xii. 57.

prepared to yield something by way of compromise, co-operation with others equally sincere but with differing judgements, will manifestly be impossible. That such compromise may be possible, without any mutilation of conscience, but with the development of a conjoined power for good otherwise unattainable, equal to all the need of the times, is the only hope for the coming of Christ's Kingdom of Heaven in years to come.

10. FOREIGN MISSIONS

Will Christianity ever be the world's only and final religion? There is at present no prospect of any such consummation. But that is not the concern of the true disciple. It is enough for him that his Master has said—"Go and take your good tidings to all the nations." So, from the very beginning, Christianity has been a propagandist faith. The Apostles, and especially Paul, were really foreign missionaries; but the world of that day was only a little sheltered garden, compared with what we now have to contemplate. True, the first Christian missionaries in the early centuries came even as far as Britain, but it was a mere tentative adventure. In all Church history, and indeed in the history of the world, there has been nothing like the development of Christian Foreign Missions which has taken place during the last century. To some extent Buddhism, Islam, and Romanism, have been propagandist. But there is no parallel between their efforts and the missions through which the Protestant Churches both of this country and America, have endeavoured, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, to make Christian truth known to the uttermost parts of the earth. The real history of that whole movement is far too vast and rich and comprehensive to be even summarized here. The names of Carey, Livingstone, Martyn, Moffatt, Hannington, Mackay, Paton,

Chalmers, stand for labours, conflicts, conquests, far too great and wonderful to be dismissed in a few words. Their marvellous records, with all the facts and figures which have to be appreciated, may be found elsewhere. The great Societies for such high purpose in England are, the Church Missionary Society; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society; the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society; the London Missionary Society (Congregational); the Baptist Missionary Society; with some smaller bodies. All these, together with the corresponding equal work in America, are included in the general principles and references which follow. But one cannot help having specially in view the work with which one has been most closely associated. In the case of the Wesleyan Methodist Society no better account of its history, struggles, and triumphs, can be imagined than that which was commenced by the late Dr. Findlay and completed by Mr. Holdsworth.¹ In that history the names of Coke, Hunt, Cargill, Hill, Selby, Wenyon, Goudie, and a host of others, will for ever be a roll of honour added to the list given above, which will call up memories of devotion never surpassed, and not often equalled, in the history of the world. In the brief summary here attempted, it will be most convenient to survey the whole case for Foreign Missions in the light of the past, the present, and the future.

1. As to the past. It is necessary to be at once careful and emphatic, by reason of the severe criticism, and not seldom virulent opposition, directed by the opponents of Christianity against the whole missionary movement. One typical and sufficient specimen of this attitude is found in the work by an alleged Chinaman (?), Lin-Shao-Yang, in which every possible clever and spiteful objection, from the Agnostic standpoint, is speciously set forth. The

¹ Two volumes. Epworth Press.

easiest task on earth is to find fault, whether with men or systems. No one has ever represented Missionary Societies, or missionaries themselves, as being superhumanly perfect in their endeavours. But whilst it is useless to answer implacable prejudice, the following statements are made with all deliberation and emphasis, as being beyond honest contradiction. The whole missionary record testifies unmistakably to these five great realities :

(i) There is no possible question, for those who know the inner history of such missions, as to the purity of the motives of those who have given themselves and their all, to this service. From Carey and Dr. Coke to Chalmers and Goudie, the one real mainspring of action has been genuine unselfishness, under the inspiration of an overwhelming desire that the blessings of Christ's Gospel should be made known throughout the world ; and especially in regions where ignorance and moral evil have brought to pass the greatest human suffering. It may be affirmed with all possible emphasis, that those missions and missionaries have had no other purpose.

(ii) It is equally beyond controversy that in the pursuance of this lofty aim, there has been an heroic devotion which has never been surpassed, if equalled, by anything recorded in the pages of history, whether sacred or secular. The heroism has indeed been twofold : first at the beginning, and then in the continuance of the missionary's work. As to the former. Critics and cynics, in recent years, have found it easy to traverse the mission fields with meticulous scrutiny. But in almost all cases, they owed their complete safety to the labours of those whom they sought to vilify. If they had preceded instead of followed the missionaries in those districts, they would not have returned alive to tell their petty tales. A passing glance at the histories of the work in Fiji, Madagascar, the South Sea Islands, and West Africa alone, is sufficient to show

the bravery of those early heroes. Without any of the mad excitement of a battlefield, or any prospect of gain or fame, they literally took their lives in their hands, and turned away from all that at home was dearest and easiest, to face difficulties, dangers, privations, even greater than those associated with Arctic expeditions, or mediæval crusades. And yet—it may be questioned, whether even such disinterested devotion was as great as that of numberless others who followed in their steps, and undertook the equally difficult and even more wearing and wearying task, through patient years, of building up Christian characters in natives who had been content with devotion to some cruel fetish, and creating Christian Churches amongst them instead of the bloodstained rites of Pagan temples.

(iii) The need for such self-sacrificing devotion was unspeakable. The Psalmist's avowal that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty," was fearfully and luridly illustrated in most of the regions to which those first missionaries went. The testimony of Charles Darwin was as impartial as emphatic, in regard to his visit to Tahiti and New Zealand. Said he :

"There are many who attack both the missionaries and their system, with the effect produced by it. They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood, profligacy unparalleled, infanticide, bloody wars where conquerors spared neither women nor children—all these have been abolished, and that dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness, have been greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. The march of improvement consequent on the introduction of Christianity throughout the South Seas, probably stands by itself in the records of history."

That summary is but a mild statement of the reality. But as such, it is a sufficient answer to the gibes of hosts of critics. To say nothing of the cruel bondage of super-

stitution and idolatry in India and China, the story of the state of things which obtained in the places just mentioned, before the arrival of the missionaries, is dark enough to make a deep and lasting impression on every one who reads with an open mind. A veritable welter of cruelty and ignorance, suffering, and misery, prevailed in the regions where missions were undertaken. The whole truth as to what those brave men and women faced, will never be known, any more than the actual hardships of those who perished in the Antarctic expedition. But enough is known to move every one possessed of mind and heart to revere their memory.

(iv) Think for a moment of the cost of such work. There has never been, and certainly is not now, on earth anything to surpass, if even to equal, that manifold cost in money and in men, in precious lives and exhausting labours, in ceaseless efforts and unmeasured patience. Besides those already named, there has been a host of little-known heroes who not only gave their own lives to the work, but endured the mental anguish of parting from all that was nearest and dearest on earth, in order, through loneliness of the environment and untold physical endurance, to take the truth of Christ's Gospel where it was most needed.

(v) No brief summary can do justice to the results of such labours, as we now look back upon them. No hostile criticism can lessen the fact that they have been trebly manifest and beneficial. They are equally real and great in the physical, mental, and spiritual realms. (a) Besides all spiritual results and the general improvement due to greater cleanliness and healthier habits, there is the incalculable benediction of medical missions. Never in the world's history has there been any form of philanthropy at once so costly in its disinterestedness, and so compassionately beneficial, as that which these skilled workers

have done in myriads of cases on all parts of the mission field. Never in the history of Christianity have the words of Jesus in Matthew xxv. been as actually and as largely fulfilled. (b) Much the same may be truly alleged concerning the educational work which is always going on, in schools of all kinds which thrive under the care of the missions. Its philanthropic influence is immeasurable, as is the actual power for good in numberless lives. It has been, and still is, a vast and unique contribution to the redemption of humanity from all the dangers of Pagan superstition and brutal ignorance. (c) No less real, though even more incalculable, have been and are the spiritual results; the changed characters which, in myriads of instances, have been brought to pass through the knowledge of Christ and His Gospel. To do justice to these, personal narratives are needed. These abound, as truthfully as happily, in all the missionary reports. With the added certainty that a greater host remains, whose transformations are untold. In a word, when everything that is doubtful has been subtracted from statistics, and all the natural imperfections of new converts allowed for, there remains such a record of what can only be called redemption, as has never before been equalled, either during or since the days of the Apostles. It is the simple truth that men and women and children, beyond calculation, have been redeemed from ignorance and suffering, from moral evil and dark despair, and have been transformed into "new creatures in Christ Jesus." They have not all been perfect, but just such as those described in the sadly needed Revised Version of Acts ii. 47—"The Lord added together day by day those that were being saved." From being humanity's wretches, ignored by civilization, they became children of hope, both for this world and the next. All this, Lord Inchcape's sneer conveniently ignored.

2. From the past let us now turn for a moment to the

present. The main features of this whole work as it now unfolds before Christian Churches and modern humanity, are these :

(i) The enormity of the task undertaken becomes more and more manifest as the world's population increases, and the vision becomes clearer as to the real condition of all the millions who are contemplated in foreign missionary work.¹ One has only to reflect for a moment upon the fact that the world's population now amounts to some 1800 millions, to see how overwhelming is the task which confronts the Christian Church to-day.

(ii) The fuller knowledge which is now to hand respecting the existing religions of India, China, and Africa, compel Christian workers both to reconsider their attitude and reform their methods, in dealing with Hinduism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Islam, and Confucianism. Former treatment of these faiths as only meriting contempt, and their devotees as simply deluded or depraved fanatics, has had to give way to a more intelligent as well as more charitable estimate.

(iii) There seems, alas, to be more likelihood of increase than decrease in one of the greatest hindrances to mission work. The misrepresentation of Christian principles and Christian character which is so often flagrantly exhibited in the life and conduct of the average European, is a spiritual tragedy. Especially in those countries which are in ever closer commercial communication with this country and America. The contrast between 'the behaviour of great numbers who hail from a "Christian country," and the plain principles of real Christian faith, as proclaimed in

¹ For a brief statement of what is involved, the little book by Rev. W. J. Noble, issued by the Cargate Press, is specially worth notice, and the bibliography at its close, though not extensive, serves well as a pointer to every sincere inquirer. It is entitled *Christ and the Changing World*.

missionary work, is too often enough to alienate all those to whom the missionaries appeal.

(iv) Another difficulty which cannot in the nature of the case be expected to grow less, but rather more as the number of converts increases, is the weakness of human nature which finds expression in the uncertainty of character in new converts. When all the influences of heredity and environment are taken fairly into account, the liability to lapse into former ways, or fall short of Christian ideals, cannot be matter for surprise. It calls much more for sympathy and patience, than for the sneering cynicism of anti-Christian critics.

(v) The wonderful and world-wide development of democracy during the last half-century cannot but affect all the nations of the East, with their mammoth populations. The ensuing popular ferment, especially in India and China, cannot but gravely affect missionary work. It is in these cases no longer a question of taking the Gospel to bloodthirsty cannibals, or blind victims of superstition, but rather the much more complex and difficult task of demonstrating to keen, highly intellectual, and patriotic opponents, that the truest, highest, most helpful and hopeful principles of light and liberty, happiness and hope, are to be found in the love and service of Jesus. The present chaos in China vividly illustrates this.

(vi) The whole political situation, both nationally and internationally, tends in the same direction. The linking together of all parts of the world through modern commercial developments, intensified by the wondrous modern facilities for transport through steam and aviation, and still more by the marvels of wireless communication, has induced a sensitiveness of relationship which, under the tremendous pressure of modern competition, may at any time cause friction and issue in the evils and horrors of war. Thus the relation between missionary workers and

the governments under which they have to live, are liable to become difficult and dangerous. Sometimes, as in Russia and China, mission work is thus entirely prevented.

(vii) The fact cannot be denied, or concealed, that, thanks to the modern atmosphere, a general attitude of indifference to religion has spread throughout Europe and America, so that in spite of increased devotion in most of the Churches, the vast majority of the population in both continents are outside them, both bodily and spiritually. To an unmeasured extent this same religious *laissez-faire* is spreading throughout the world. In some portions of the mission field it is becoming another real handicap to Christian efforts, and one which is not likely to grow less.

(viii) Meanwhile, there are also significant signs of revival in some of the other religions which Christian missions cannot but desire to displace. It is not so long since a young Scotsman came back to England from abroad with the avowed intention of converting the people of this country to Buddhism; whilst a Peer of the realm is known as a strong advocate of Islam. Quite recently (1926), the cinemas throughout this country exhibited the public ceremony in connection with the erection and opening of a Mohammedan mosque in London. So, for the first time, the cry of the *muezzin*, summoning to prayer in the name of Allah, has been heard in the Metropolis. Such incidents may be accounted trifling, but they are typical of much more. Hinduism and Confucianism retain their hold upon millions. Buddhism is being provoked to special activity; whilst the ceaseless propagation of Islam seems to yield a fair prospect of conquering the main bulk of the North African continent, unless checked by some mighty extra efforts of Christian missionaries. In a word, if the unquestionable successes of Christian missions give reasons for thankfulness, the enormity and persistence of the untouched residue are truly appalling.

(ix) Of late years, since the means of transport have become so much easier, large numbers of natives from the East, of all grades of society, but specially young men as students, or in business, have come to reside in this country. Here, however, they have seen so much of the darker, "seamy" side of life, especially in our great cities, that they have taken it to be proof of the failure of Christianity as a social or national influence. Thus they have not only themselves been alienated, but have taken back to India, and China, and Japan, such representations of "Christian England," as have prejudiced their fellow-countrymen against all things Christian, including missions and missionaries. A new and difficult situation is thus created of which the early pioneers knew nothing.

(x) But more than that has yet to be faced. The opposition to the work of Christian missions is increasingly positive as well as negative. The self-styled "Rationalism" which in this country is not merely persistently Agnostic, but virulently anti-Christian, is by no means forgetful of foreign countries. Literally tons of most clever, specious, and bitter anti-Christian publications, are exported from Great Britain every year, and find eager readers in the populous cities of the East, whence their influence extends more and more into the surrounding districts. It is easy to ignore such opposition, as do the Churches in this country. But the facts remain, and their influence is far-reaching, as our missionaries know. It is fairly certain that this kind of hindrance will increase rather than otherwise.

(xi) At the present time the influence of Bolshevism, as an aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the Great War, is spreading in all eastern directions. Especially in China and India, where its ruthless and vindictive denunciation of Christianity finds unprecedented opportunity, in the social unrest and political conflicts which are agitating those vast realms as never before. The wonderful work

of the China Inland Mission has not been accomplished without much loss and suffering; and the horrors of the Boxer Rising cannot be forgotten. But there is every indication that the work in China will be more difficult than ever, in spite of all the good that has there been accomplished by the incalculable and influential heroism of both men and women, in medical missions.

(xii) There is yet another difficulty which is as inevitable as it is complex and delicate, and was quite unknown to the devoted workers of the past. It stands to reason that during the nineteenth century the human mind could not remain stagnant in religion, any more than in science. Thus there has come to pass, slowly but surely, a development of Christian doctrine such as cannot but affect the message concerning Christ and His Gospel which is taken by British and American missionaries to all the other parts of the world. Beyond all question, the doctrines preached by the pioneers of Christian missions were what to-day are termed "Fundamentalism." Speaking generally, these are still largely maintained on the mission fields. But it is quite impossible to suppress the new conceptions and convictions which are leavening British Churches, or prevent them from influencing mission work. The missionaries of to-day are quite as pure in motive, and devoted in labour, as were their predecessors. But they are necessarily better educated. Every year there are increasing numbers of university graduates, who cannot but be influenced by modern science and the more critical study of the Bible. The great difficulty, therefore, for the modern missionary is not merely to satisfy his own mind, but, assuming that he is convinced of the need for some modification of former doctrinal statements and attitudes, to know how in his particular field of work he can be loyal to what he knows to be true, and at the same time work with others who do not share his convictions. There is

every indication that the divergence between present-day conceptions of Christian doctrine, and those of half a century ago, is becoming more pronounced; whilst the general attitude of those who cling to the "Fundamentalist" view, is so militant as well as dogmatic, as to cause serious apprehension of lamentable conflict in the days to come, abroad as well as at home.

3. As to the future. In view of all these difficulties, which have only been summarized, one may well ask what is to be the future of Christian Foreign Missions? The main features of the outlook would seem to be, in succinct statement, somewhat as follows:

(i) There is neither prospect nor Christian warrant for expecting a sudden cataclysmic Millennium. However much sincerity is to be respected, the attitude of many devoted Christians herein, as mentioned above, is greatly to be regretted. Strong avowals and persistent appeals are being made in regard to Christ's "Second Coming," which bid men look for some tremendous catastrophe to bring about a universal spiritual transformation. It is not too much to say that if such had been possible, the love of God would have accomplished it ages ago. It must suffice here to avow that such a notion is as mistaken and misleading now, as it was during the first century of the Christian era. It is not God's way, either in the physical universe, or the Kingdom of Heaven.¹ We are well warranted, therefore, in dismissing this thought altogether from the missionary programme of the future.

(ii) It is worse than useless to blind ourselves to the fact that, in many respects, there are real reasons for anticipating increasing hindrances, social and political as well as moral and spiritual, in the way of such Christian

¹ An excellent statement of the more true and worthy conception will be found in Dr. W. N. Clarke's volume, *Outline of Christian Theology* (T. & T. Clark), pp. 428-448.

propagandism as Foreign Missions represent. They will differ from those of former days, but will be often even harder to overcome.

(iii) But be they what they may, the plain duty of world-wide effort will remain for Christian Churches, both from the word of Christ Himself, and from the manifest need of all that His Gospel really means to humanity. Unless the whole New Testament be dismissed as unworthy of notice, His commission and authority are final.¹ Moreover, His assurance that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," remains one of the abiding principles of Christianity which can neither be challenged nor ignored. Whatever may be the cost, the hindrances, the difficulties, of such unselfish service, to cease from foreign missionary work would be to abandon Christ, and make faith in Him a mockery.

(iv) To every thoughtful mind it is overwhelmingly manifest that the need just hinted at above, grows ever greater as population increases. If civilization is to endure, the modern world, both abroad and at home, needs something more than all its science or philosophy, its politics or patriotism. Its evils, dangers, conflicts, jealousies, are too plain to need describing. Millions upon millions of money are being expended upon vice and luxury; as well as in preparation for another such awful war as Marshal Foch deems likely within twenty years. The ghastly inequalities of human society still doom millions, alike in the East and the West, to a life not worth living, through want and misery and degradation. All the modern improvements which may truthfully be alleged, do not give us, apart from the real Gospel of Jesus, any guarantee of the coming of that human brotherhood when the "greatest happiness of the greatest number"

¹ There is no textual warrant for the suggestion that Matt. xxviii. 19 is an interpolation which may be left out of account.

will become an experienced reality, instead of a mere Utopian dream.

(v) Yet, when all the above-mentioned difficulties and hindrances are frankly and honestly estimated, there are really no grounds for discouragement in the great work of Christian missions, but very much to encourage and inspire. It is neither possible nor necessary here to attempt even a summary of the remarkable facts to this effect, which are vouched for in the reports of the various societies. Yet perhaps one record might profitably be specified, as typical of the rest. The following carefully gathered figures are surely worthy of regard. They show a comparison for sixty years, in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society alone, in regard to chapels, local preachers, and church members, in India, China, and West Africa. They may be thus tabulated :

		Chapels.	Local Preachers.	Church Members.
India	1866	54	8	553
	1926	896	427	17,425
China	1866	7	0	45
	1926	228	356	7,828
West Africa	1866	113	198	7,207
	1926	1164	2235	62,454

But in regard to the last named, much greater increase might truly be reported.¹ On the whole, the present

¹ Fuller information concerning the work of this great Society is issued monthly, in a most interesting and beautifully illustrated journal, entitled *The Foreign Field*. The work recorded therein is quite as remarkable and successful, from the Christian standpoint, as anything narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. The Editor

situation in all its vastness and complexity may be gathered into three general but careful and deliberate statements :

(a) The success which has attended Christian devotion in foreign fields is far greater than could have been anticipated, and is in moral and spiritual result quite incalculable.

(b) There is every promise of its becoming still greater. In West Africa especially, but by no means there only, the paradox now obtains, that the most real embarrassment is in the success. It has been too real, too great, for the workers on the spot to guide or control. (c) Thus it has come to pass that in all parts of the mission field, doors of opportunity are now open as never before. The Apostolic vision of a man from Macedonia crying—"Come over and help us"—is now being repeated on a scale never before experienced or anticipated.

(vi) The future of Christianity in far-off lands, undoubtedly depends upon the response of the British and American Churches to the unmistakable and importunate calls which thus come to them. And the response will have to be twofold—both in thought, and in deed.

(a) Certainly in thought. That is to say, in spite of the frenzied outcries of some Fundamentalists, there will have to be some real modification in the representation of Christ's true Gospel, as compared with what has been taught in former years. Sufficient illustration of this may be found in what has recently been related concerning the great Indian mystic and patriot, Gandhi. After avowing the greatest respect for Christianity and reverence for

remarks in a recent issue—for October 1926—"There were nearly 13,000 adult baptisms last year, and a net increase of 6300 in the full membership of our Church in mission lands." When it is remembered that very similar results are truly tabulated by all the other great Societies, the Editor's closing words are abundantly justified—"In these facts we read the sure promise of still greater harvests in ever-widening fields, even as the following pages tell of the varying experiences of the labourers."

Christ, he said that, speaking the truth in love, he must tell his missionary friends that they had largely failed because they had come to India under the influence of the hymn which said that in his country

“ Every prospect pleases
And only man is vile.”

The direction in which that criticism points is manifest enough. Its full import must be discussed elsewhere. But special reference should be made to the remarkable and impressive volume of Dr. E. Stanley Jones—an Indian missionary—entitled *The Christ of the Indian Road*—now in its sixth American edition and published by Hodder & Stoughton. It cannot be summarized, but his references to Mahatma Gandhi are most significant. Here is his own conclusion :

“ On my return after an absence of nearly two years I find India even more open and responsive than when I left. The mass movement in mind goes on in silent but unabated vigour. As the physical atmosphere becomes saturated with moisture and heavy to the point of precipitation, so the spiritual atmosphere of India is becoming saturated with Christ's thoughts and ideals, and is heavy to the point of precipitation into Christian forms and expression. As to when that will take place, depends upon how much Christ-likeness we can put into the situation. As the leading Arya Samajist in India recently said to me—‘ Everything depends upon the Christian Church.’ It does.”

For the moment, it is enough to say, with equal gentleness and emphasis, that in these days in which knowledge—scientific, literary, and theological—is diffused all over the globe as never before, there will have to be some adaptation to the actual situation, alike in emphasizing the Christian motive, in formulating Christian doctrine, and in developing Christian methods of work. The former ways of thought and effort are no more sufficient for to-day in religion, than in any other realm of human life.

(b) The practical response is and must be costly. It is true that already the unselfish generosity of Christian believers in this respect, exceeds anything of the kind in the past history or present doings of the world. What was asserted above is true, namely, that when the whole scope of philanthropy is considered, both at home and abroad, the Christian Churches, whatever their shortcomings, are now doing more in one week, than all unbelief has done since the Christian era began. And yet there is room, there is need, there is a possibility, for more. Christian giving, as a rule to which there are doubtless many noble exceptions, has not in general reached the ideal of genuine self-denial which would enable the Missionary Societies to cope with the needs and appeals of the modern world.

Here is the plain summary of the whole case which confronts the Christian Churches of this country and America, at the present juncture. The great task they have taken in hand was never in such need of the utmost support as now. The condition of humanity, in all its cosmopolitan developments, calls increasingly for all that the Gospel of Jesus represents. Through the marvellous success which has attended their past efforts, unequalled and unmeasured opportunities for missionary devotion are opening out in all directions. A noble army of eager workers are as ready as ever to give themselves unselfishly to this great cause. All that remains, therefore, is that in the home churches every man, woman, and child, should do everything possible for their support. Then, only then, we may commit the issues to God, as revealed to men in Jesus Christ.

11. SUNDAY, AS THE LORD'S DAY

No feature of modern life shows more plainly the changed religious atmosphere of this country during recent years, than the growing indifference to the observance of Sunday as, in the Christian sense, "the Lord's Day." The change is not merely in the comparative decrease of attendance at church services, but in the general attitude of the people towards this Christian sacred day. The former atmosphere of quiet restfulness, when all shops were closed, all ordinary traffic suspended, public games prohibited, and places of amusement silenced, has gone, apparently, for ever. These distinctive marks of the Christian Lord's Day have indeed long ago disappeared from the Continent, thanks to the influence of anti-Christian developments, which the doctrines and practices of the Romish Church could do little or nothing to check. But the British Sunday has been so long maintained as a sacred trust by all Protestant Churches, that until recent years it has remained more or less inviolate. Its importance as the Day of days for Christian faith, is too manifest to need expression, and scarcely admits of exaggeration. The whole question whether the Christianity of the future shall be a comparatively small esoteric Society amidst an Agnostic environment, or a national religion becoming more and more international, may truly be said to turn upon the maintenance or dismissal of Sunday as the Christian Lord's Day. For it is, beyond question, the visible embodiment and constant reminder of all that is most true and sacred, most precious and inspiring, in Christ's Gospel. Hereupon three questions suggest themselves as equally necessary and timely: (1) What is the real explanation of the changed feeling and behaviour of the people in regard to Sunday? (2) What is the truly Christian attitude towards it? (3) How can that attitude

be maintained and further developed? Each of these merits careful consideration.

1. There is no one simple cause for the diminished regard of the majority of the people for the Christian day of rest. Rather are there so many influences increasingly at work against all such regard, that the marvel is so much reverence for it and appreciation of it still remain. Each of the following factors is not merely in actual operation, but admits of much fuller and more emphatic statement than is here possible. But with all of these, the Christian Church to-day has undoubtedly to reckon.

(i) The enormous growth of the population and aggregation into large towns or cities, where an altogether different atmosphere, moral and spiritual, prevails from that of bygone days. Even if all the people were now anxious to keep Sunday sacred by church attendance, they could not possibly be accommodated. Scarcely more than one-tenth of London's seven millions, for instance, could find place in all the churches of the Metropolis, including every denomination. Proportionately the same obtains in all the cities of the land. But such inevitable and continual exclusion from public worship cannot but breed disregard for all that the churches represent, especially the sacredness of the first day of the week for Christian reasons.

(ii) Along with the enlargement of the population, has come, as we have seen above, the development of democracy, with unmeasured increase of personal liberty of thought, speech, and action, and the consequent lessening of the principle of authority, which used to be so potent an influence in making the Sunday to differ from the other days of the week.

(iii) Equally manifest, and quite inevitable, has been the increased stress of business cares, through the all-prevalent competitive system in modern commerce; together with

the keener general fight of life and the growing tragic problem of unemployment, all of which tend much more to secularize than to hallow Sunday as a day of rest.

(iv) During the last half-century, moreover, there has set in a stronger revolt than before, against the former rigid observance of the "Sabbath" which was so large a part of the Puritan ideal, and held the whole country—especially Scotland—in its grip. It cannot be denied that under this régime, for a long time, the "Sabbath" was a day of weary dreariness and hard discomfort, especially for the young. It is small wonder that human nature found it intolerable.

(v) Reactions are always extreme, and that which in the time of Charles II. followed in the wake of the Puritan rigidity, has both continued until now, and gathered strength with passing years. Indeed, so materialistic and anti-Christian an observer as Mr. Jos. M'Cabe has openly declared that this is an age of self-willed frivolity beyond all precedent. The craving for sensational excitements and pleasures has increased incalculably. Thus the efforts to promote games as well as music in public parks on Sunday, and to open cinemas, etc., are becoming more persistent and influential. In London they have already largely succeeded.

(vi) There can be no honest doubt that in this respect as in some others, the late frightful war has had a disastrous effect. During war, of course, there are no Sundays. All days are alike for fighting; and in spite of all the padres and their general devotion to their duties, there is an inevitable lowering of the ethical and spiritual standard. This lamentable influence lasts long after peace is settled, and has greatly added to the tendency to make all following Sundays at home as little recognized and as lightly esteemed as in the trenches.

(vii) This tendency is increased by many things which

have transpired since the Armistice. One of these, especially in regard to the attendance at public worship during the winter months, is the marvellous development of "wireless" broadcasting. For increasing numbers, it is an easy and lazy substitute for churchgoing. But plainly in the programmes provided by the B.B.C., although in general the music may be pronounced high class, there is no attempt at any special sacredness; whilst as to the alleged "religious service," it is cut down to such a veritable minimum, as to indicate rather a kind of sop thrown in to placate the religious world, than any real wish, in any sense or degree, to acknowledge Sunday as a day of specially sacred remembrance.

(viii) As wireless facilities relate mostly to winter, so in summer, other influences detracting from any specially sacred estimate of Sunday, are found in the marvellous increase of all kinds of transport, both public and private. The incalculable multiplication of trains, trams, motor-cars, motor-bikes, chars-à-bancs, and the like, make it easy beyond all precedent, for all classes of the people to turn Sunday into a mere opportunity for mutual visitation or joy-riding. This is, in itself, innocent enough for all except the rigid Sabbatarian. But when seven-tenths of the people are already indifferent to Christian sanctions, it is certain that these ever-increasing facilities will help to diminish any remaining regard for Sunday as a day—in Canon Elliott's words—"for mental, moral, and spiritual development, and equipment for further service of others." There used to be a real suggestion of peace and happiness in a "Sunday at home." In numberless cases it was truly the best of all the seven; for children and servants, as well as for master and mistress, it was happily sacred. Now, it is taken as a mark of superiority to sneer at such days as "Victorian." But there are thousands of the best men and noblest women of to-day, who remember with thankful-

ness the time when they looked forward to Sunday, as being not only free from school and lessons, but bringing a charm of its own, as real as inexpressible. One may say this, deliberately and with emphasis, from grateful recollection of just such a home and such Sundays; so that after the passing of years, a pathetic longing wells up to have those days over again. But now—there is only too much reason to fear that such experiences are coming to be the exception, rather than the rule, even in the churches.

(ix) It is a poor, poor-substitute that these days are offering us, in the growing disposition in our British midst to adopt the "Continental Sunday." All that this name conveys cannot be put into a few words. In very deed, it is a proffered exchange of gaudy tinsel for solid gold. The growing force of this "continental" tendency—especially in all our seaside summer resorts—is apparently resistless. It just suits those who have agreed to dismiss God from their thoughts, and treat Christianity as a worn-out fable, being quite content with a sensational animalism. But it is as far from all the deeper happiness and nobler benediction of the Christian Lord's Day, as paste is from diamond, or November from July.

(x) On the other hand, it is quite possible that the unmeasured spread of education, though working undoubtedly for the general good, may in this respect prove a real hindrance to the best. Closer Biblical study is indeed inevitable, and Modernism, rightly understood, should help not hinder public worship. But there is confessedly the possibility of drifting into a cold intellectualism which would make Churches into refrigerators, and create another kind of dismal Sunday, as far from the Christian ideal as the coarse animalism of the uneducated.

† (xi) There are "growing pains" in religion, more real than those attributed to bodily development. It is quite

right and necessary—as we shall presently see—that it should be made plain that the hallowing of the Christian Lord's Day does not depend for its authority and obligation, any more than for its ideal, upon the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, in spite of its constant recital in Church services. But for the popular mind there is always danger as well as difficulty, in passing from convention to reality, however plainly the former may be false and the latter true. Custom is so easy to follow ; easiest of all in religion, when backed up by ecclesiastical authority ; whilst spiritual truth is often hard to discern, and still harder to practise. The transition from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Lord's Day was as difficult for many of the first Christians, as for those who to-day quite sincerely call themselves "Seventh-Day Adventists." So too, practically, it is apparently almost impossible for numbers of modern Christians to distinguish, as to the Lord's Day, between the liberty wherewith Christ sets His disciples free, and the licence which scorns the Christian ideal altogether.

(xii) As to this last suggestion, it is only too well warranted. The agencies now at work in these realms, with a view to make such scorn universal, are generally underrated by the Churches, but are none the less potent and persistent. The "National Sunday League" has for its avowed purpose the development in our British midst of all the aims and methods of the Continental Sunday ; whilst "Ethical Societies," "Secularist Societies," and the political meetings of the Labour Party, all combine to ignore everything which Christian faith cannot but deem most sacred and helpful. The influence of all this ceaseless, clever, bitter antagonism to everything Christian, has undoubtedly contributed in greater measure than is usually acknowledged, to the growing indifference which is quite content to trample under foot all former, higher, and deeper, respect for the Christian Lord's Day.

(xiii) On the whole it must be acknowledged, whatever the risk of being styled "Victorian," that the attitude of the Romish Church, together with that of many Anglicans and "Anglo-Catholics," herein, does also contribute to the lowering of the Christian ideal in regard to Sunday. "Go to Mass in the morning, and do as you like for the rest of the day," is a poor, superficial, and unworthy representation of all that that day should mean for every real Christian. It is harder, as Tennyson so forcibly said, to deal with a half-truth than with a whole lie. In spiritual principle, certainly, all days are alike to Christ's genuine disciple; and the words of the Apostle in Col. ii. 16, are the Christian's veritable Magna Charta for all time. But the same Apostle said with equal truth (1 Cor. vi. 12) that whilst "all things are lawful, not all things are expedient." The keeping of the Lord's Day is indeed no rigid law, weighted with penalties, which can only be avoided by prescribed rites, and ceremonies, and services. But there is something stronger than law; and that is, love. It is a poor, poor sort of faith that cares only for law, and has no reverence for love. If the profession of Christian faith involves no better appreciation and reminder of this world's darkest tragedy and greatest triumph, than "do as you like" on the day most closely associated therewith, the world outside the Church can scarcely be blamed for its indifference.

(xiv) It must, however, be confessed in all honesty, that a great deal of the popular confusion of thought and practical disregard of the Lord's Day, arises from the lack of true and careful and unequivocal teaching hereupon in Christian pulpits. The general treatment of it reminds one forcibly of the Scotch divine who, when he came to a difficult question in his discourse, said—"Now this is a serious matter which involves much difficulty; we will therefore look it fairly in the face—and pass on." For

such hesitation there are no doubt two intelligible reasons :

(a) On the one hand, there are yet many preachers and Churches still under the bondage of the Old Dispensation, and led, by a false theory of Biblical inspiration, to regard all the Ten Commandments of Moses, just as they stand in Exodus xx., as the real Christian law. Thus, in spite of Christ's unmistakable attitude, and of the fact that no one of such present-day Sabbatarians ever keeps or intends to keep the Fourth Commandment, they still recite it in public with responses, or emblazon it on their walls.

(b) On the other hand, very many preachers who know the truth, are either carelessly indifferent to the great issues at stake, or are afraid of the trouble which might arise if they should disturb the comfortable conventions of their congregations, with teaching which departed from the beaten path. The brave example of Christ Himself, as well as of His apostles in this respect, they ignore. Meanwhile, the incontrovertible truth remains, that if Jesus Himself and His disciples had not set at defiance the orthodoxy of that day, and taught new truth to supersede the old, Christianity would never have been born. How He and they suffered for their fidelity to truth, we know. And it was repeated in the last century, when F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, dared to follow their example, and preach Christian truth in regard to the Lord's Day, in opposition to the smug ecclesiastical conventions which then prevailed. He was verily in the Apostolical succession, if Paul's letter to the Galatians is duly appreciated ; and like the great Apostle, he was the pioneer of a new day and the herald of a larger hope for all who came after him.

2. So we come to consider, as carefully as briefly, what is to-day the true Christian attitude in this most important but equally difficult matter. The following seem to be the main elements of the case :

(i) The origin of the Sabbath does not here concern us.

It is really lost in antiquity,¹ but there is little doubt that the Jews derived it from Babylonia, and under the guidance of Moses, purified and emphasized it.

(ii) But the clear starting-point for our thought here, is that the Christian Lord's Day is *not* the Jewish Sabbath, *nor* its adaptation. The Christian observance of Sunday is not based upon the Fourth Commandment; nor are the strict injunctions of that Command, the Christian law. The Lord's Day, as Christians know it, does not depend upon the Decalogue at all, either for ideal or authority. It ought to be much more plainly stated than it is, that the "Ten Commandments" of Moses, however wise and necessary for the slave rabble that came out of Egypt, no more constitute the Christian law, than the multiplication table is the sufficient guide for the mathematician. The Apostle really puts the whole relationship into a word when he wrote to the Galatians, as noted above, that "the law has been our trainer to prepare us for Christ."

(iii) No more is the Old Testament in general, either the source of obligation or the ideal of the Christian Day. When this subject is dealt with in the pulpit, the 58th chapter of Isaiah is almost always read as a "lesson," without any note or comment, as if it was the Christian law and example! Which it certainly is not. Those who read, and those who hear, are generally as content to repeat those words without the least intention of heeding them, as they are in regard to the Fourth Commandment. In the latter case—"Thou shalt do no manner of work," with all else that follows, is utterly ignored, and forgotten as soon as spoken. So too are the words in Isaiah—see especially verses 6 and 7. This chapter does indeed set

¹ An excellent general account of its history and development will be found in Clark's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. xii., under the word "Sunday," which will suffice for every ordinary student.

forth a bright and happy and beautiful ideal, and as such it may well be read in public. But the real "lesson" is *a fortiori*. If under the Old Dispensation, when there was no Christ, and no Gospel, the Jewish weekly day of rest was as truly glad, as divinely lofty, and as humanly unselfish, as is here set forth, how much more so should the Christian Day, which commemorates the Christ of the Gospels and all His significance to mankind, be for all who bear His name?

(iv) To a great extent Jesus Himself acknowledged and obeyed the Sabbath law. But He also did what no other teacher had dared to do, or even dreamt of doing—He modified its injunctions, and contradicted the intolerably meticulous interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees, whilst enlarging its scope and endorsing its weekly observance. He made no reference at any time to "ten" commandments, but regarded them generally as part of the "law of Moses," which was binding upon all faithful Jews. The Apostle truthfully represented his Master's attitude when, to the Roman Christians, he wrote:

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and *if there be any other commandment*, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love does no ill to his neighbour; love therefore is the fulfilment of the law."

The Ten Commandments as generally read, are taken from Exodus xx. But there are other versions of them in the same book, which must equally be taken into account if a Christian law is to be drawn from the Old Testament. There is manifestly a great deal more than the Ten Commandments in the Book of Deuteronomy—which was certainly known both to Jesus Himself and to Paul. Undoubtedly all this was in His mind when, from Deuteronomy and Leviticus He took the two Great Commands, but so intensified the first and enlarged the second, that they

swallow up all the Ten, and become as much more comprehensive as they needed to be for His purpose. The "Kingdom of Heaven" on earth was an immeasurably vaster conception than the Jewish theocracy. By His own example as a pious Jew, He endorsed the hallowing of a weekly day for rest and worship. But He did not re-rivet upon His disciples the ancient rigid law, either as to time or manner of observance. After His death and resurrection, it was not on the Jewish Sabbath that He revealed Himself as the living Lord to His trembling and troubled disciples, but on the first day of the week, the "third" day to which He had so often referred. What higher or more distinctive hallowing of that day could there have been ?

(v) After the resurrection, there was for some time, naturally and inevitably, a real overlapping of two sacred days. It was only natural that the first converts, being Jews, should at first maintain their former allegiance to the Sabbath. Yet it was equally natural that the first converts from outside, not being Jews, should feel no such obligation, but give their whole regard to the day which was for them so inexpressibly significant, as the reminder of their risen Lord and pledge of His resurrection life. How strongly the Jewish believers strove to compel all the new converts to accept also the preceding Jewish ideals, and how unmistakably the Apostle of the Gentiles protested against any such compulsion, is abundantly manifest in all his letters, though most of all in that to the Galatians—"With freedom did Christ set us free ; stand fast therefore, and be not again entangled in a yoke of bondage."

(vi) The gradual supremacy of the first day of the week as the Christian Lord's Day, did not come to pass by accident, but for valid reasons. (a) The great increase in the number of Gentile converts who could not be compelled

to observe the Jewish Sabbath. (b) The rightful estimate of Christ's resurrection on that day, as being the crowning proof of His triumph over death, and consequently the proof of His divine Lordship, and endorsement of His authority as supreme Teacher. (c) The better understanding of His Gospel message, bringing life and liberty through the truer knowledge of God as the universal Father, instead of the former merely national theocracy, with the "law of commandments in ordinances" which formed the backbone of the Jewish dispensation. The avowal of Jesus—"I am come that they may have life and may have it as never before"¹—was only gradually apprehended. It required the passing of the years and the convulsions of a century, to throw them into their proper relief. The writings which constitute our New Testament, and especially the letter to the Hebrews, show how gradual and difficult was the transition from Jewish legality to the Christian freedom of loving service.

(vii) There is thus, in all the New Testament, no authoritative pronouncement, no definite command regarding the Lord's Day, either as to the time or manner of its observance. No protest on behalf of Christian liberty could be more clear, comprehensive, and emphatic than that of Paul in his letter to the Romans (ch. xiv.), and also to the Colossians (ch. ii. 16). Early Christian believers kept the first day of the week sacred, not as slaves of a Sinaitic law with penalties for disobedience, but as the convinced and devoted disciples of a living Lord whose self-sacrificing love had both set them free from bondage to Judaism, and bound them to loyal remembrance of Himself, through loving gratitude and joyful hope. The council at Jerusalem

¹ Such is the true significance of *περισσόν* in this passage. Compare Matt. v. 47, *τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε*; where plainly the meaning is, as the context also shows, "What *extra* do ye?" In both cases, the idea of excess, or superiority, is radical and essential.

recorded in the Acts (xv. 6-35) well illustrates the tenacity above mentioned, with which the Christian Jews clung to their former convictions and customs.

(viii) There was then, and there is still, so long as real Christianity endures, no need of any rigid dogma or legal threatening, to ensure the hallowing of the first day of the week. On that day the crucified Christ of the Gospels triumphed over death, and as the Lord of life communed with those who had learned to trust Him. His life and teaching, His death and resurrection, meant the introduction of a new era, which brought with it a new vision of God, a new conception of human nature, a new standard of living, a new power of deliverance from evil, and a new hope both for this life and for another higher, happier, nobler life to come beyond the grave. Such a Gospel needed no thunders of the law to enforce it. It was, and is, enshrined in the inmost soul; and like all earth's deepest, tenderest relationships, found its sufficient dynamic in reverent, grateful, reciprocal love. If only throughout "Christendom" such real and grateful love to the living Lord ruled every heart and mind, there would be no more difficulty as to the time and manner of keeping His day, than there is when, in ordinary wedded life, two that have loved each other well and long, rejoice to celebrate the day when they pledged themselves to each other in the blessed bondage of holy wedlock.

3. How, then, can this truly Christian attitude be maintained and increased? The sentence last written, one knows too well, reads more like a mirage in the desert than a reasonable hope. But the depressing possibilities of the future are no more the business of the true disciple of Christ, than the chances of defeat in war are to a loyal soldier. Truth, duty, and hope, remain, whatever difficulties block the way. The importance of the Lord's Day to the Christian Church cannot be over-estimated.

But it can never be maintained, let alone enlarged in scope and increased in holy influence, by any kind of compulsion, legal or ecclesiastical. The days for enforcing religion by law are gone for ever. Only upon some such principles as the following, can any hope be based for the future redemption of the Christian day of rest, from the rigid and depressing tyranny of a Puritan Sabbatarianism on the one hand, or on the other, from the godless, soulless animalism of a mere sensational revel or lazy stupor.

(i) The first real necessity is that there should be more clear and unequivocal teaching hereupon in Christian pulpits. It is for lack of this, sometimes through Fundamentalist obscurantism, sometimes for fear of disturbing popular conventions, that so much confusion of mind and heart still prevail herein. It is quite common to hear warnings against "Sabbath breaking," and, indeed, to see posters to that effect outside Christian Churches. Even as it is to find the Ten Commandments written up inside, in gilded letters where every one must see them, as if they constituted the Christian law, or represented Christ's Gospel. Whereas, the plain truth, which ought to be clearly told, is that for the Christian, as shown above, there is no "Sabbath"; and the "Ten," which neither Jesus nor the Apostles ever so specified, are not the Christian law any more than Leviticus or Deuteronomy. There is no Christian or Scriptural warrant whatever for picking out Exodus xx. from all its context, and setting it on a pedestal as the complete and unchanging Christian law. It is but mockery for Christian congregations to sing—"Incline our hearts to keep this law," when the preceding "law" has either no application to the life of to-day (First and Second Command), or has been by Christ Himself (Matt. v.-vii.) set aside for something far deeper, higher, and more comprehensive.

Strange indeed it is, that in scarcely any Christian

“place of worship” are the two exhibited concerning which He said so emphatically—“There is no other command greater than these”; or the list of the Beatitudes which He so earnestly proclaimed. Seldom, also, is the full significance of the first twenty-one verses in our twelfth chapter of Matthew made as vivid and comprehensive as it deserves.

Christians have long been accustomed, thanks to Constantine, in 321 A.D., to the name “Sunday,” and it is now impossible to get rid of it. But the only true name for the first day of the week in Christian parlance, ought undoubtedly to be “The Lord’s Day.” Although it has, unfortunately, come to be associated sometimes with an excessive pietism, it ought certainly to replace all reference to the “Sabbath,” on Christian lips. There may well be to-day a “Sunday question,” in view of all that has been pointed out above. But there is no “Sabbath question”; for that was settled at the same time as the Jewish yoke of circumcision—the orthodoxy of that day—was finally removed from the consciences of Christian converts. But ordinary congregations and Church members do not understand that; and in view of all to-day’s environment, it is high time that they did.

(ii) For until such a lesson is learned, there is no possibility of the personal appreciation of all the comfort, and gladness, and inspiration, which are the very essence of the ideal Christian sacred day. It ought undoubtedly to be what Bishop Wordsworth said :

“ O day of rest and gladness,
O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright ! ”

But it is to be feared that in these days of haste and excitement, the influences of the environment, as summarized above, make such experience much more rare than formerly. And it is not helped by hymns which continu-

ally refer to the "Lord of the Sabbath" as if nothing had happened since Jesus used that phrase to rebuke the Pharisees—and are content with this :

"The suffering scarce, alas, can know,
This from the other days of woe;
May we the worth of Sabbaths learn
Before we suffer in our turn.

The blest no sun save Jesus see,
No Sabbath save eternity;
May our brief Sabbaths melt away,
In the clear light of endless day."

It would be great gain for Christian reality if all the hymns in which reference is made to the "Sabbath," were either revised or destroyed; for as long as the word remains, there will inevitably come with it the atmosphere of the Puritan or Jewish day. Even in regard to Whittier's beautiful hymn, which truly prays :

"Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered souls confess
The beauty of Thy peace,"

it has to be remembered that when he says :

"O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love,"

it is a picture of the past, which points on to something better. "On the Lord's Day I found myself rapt in the Spirit,"¹ should mean more than any "Sabbath rest by Galilee." For there is now another voice for those who listen—"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever—

¹ Moffatt, Rev. i. 10.

more." Words will not indeed convey the experience which that listening brings :

" With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall,
As fell Thy manna down."

But it is the spring of all else that makes the Lord's Day to be as an oasis in a wilderness, a draught of pure cool water to a parched and weary traveller.

(iii) Somehow, such an experience of gladness and cheerful inspiring may be, and must be, diffused through the home, and especially conveyed to the children. Alas, in many homes, even of avowedly Christian believers, as well as amongst non-Christians, Sunday is to the home and the young anything but the best of all the seven. Laziness in bed, dullness when up, selfishness and irritability, are too often the usual accompaniments of absence from business and school. When, as too often, the routine is churchgoing in the morning by compulsion, Sunday school in the afternoon as an uninviting duty, a home atmosphere made uncomfortable by petty prohibitions, what wonder that young folk should wish there were no Sundays, and dread their recurrence ? What then becomes of even the ancient Jewish ideal :

" And all the people went away home, to eat, and to drink, and to send gifts to those who were in need, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words which were declared unto them." ¹

The query asked above must be repeated—if such brightness, gladness, and unselfish generosity characterized the Jewish holy day, how much still sweeter, happier, more mutually helpful, ought to be the Christian Day of days ? It is no Utopian dream, for, as hinted above, even after

¹ See Neh. viii. 1-12.

the lapse of more than sixty years, the memory is fresh and vivid of that Christian home where not only was all the thronging business of the week hushed to peace, but the indescribable atmosphere of rest, and mutual happiness, and brightness, made my child-mind wish that every day was a Sunday, and think how beautiful it must be to be a grown-up Christian.

(iv) Alas, there are practical as well as spiritual hindrances to such a happy hallowing of the Lord's Day. The quaint old phrase in Nehemiah—"Send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared"—is a tragic as well as pathetic pointer to a far greater and more pitiful modern environment. Generosity on Sundays should not be confined to public collections. One great and far from easy lesson, for those to learn which fully appreciate the Lord's Day and try to observe it worthily at home, is to remember with charity and sympathy all who differ from them, both in convictions and in habits. Especially such as are so often terribly hindered by life's heavy handicaps of suffering, conflict, and poverty. It is easy enough for bishops and preachers and occupants of cushioned pews, to wax indignant at the prevalent "Sabbath breaking"; or utter loud lamentations at the "desecration" of the Lord's Day. They ignore many realities which God takes into account. The preacher and his audience can go back in winter to a cosy home where all is comfortable and cheerful; just as in summer they can enjoy peaceful rambles through parks or gardens which are strictly "private." But not so the myriads of dwellers in the long, dreary streets of little houses where all has to be done in a twelve-foot-square room, to say nothing of the "back-to-back" abominations and slums where human beings by the thousand are imprisoned by our "advanced" civilization. In summer, the old folk may take their quiet walk, and the young people do their courting, in the fields or a park.

But in winter, when the street promenades are no longer possible, where are the ever-growing numbers of the majority to find rest and gladness, helpful company or innocent recreation? Meanwhile, the bishops and preachers and their congregations, can go home to well-appointed libraries, or heavily carpeted drawing-rooms, and call for their daughters to play them sacred music, or join in inspiring singing. The remembrance of these tragic and pitiful disparities must surely modify all estimates of "Sabbath breaking." The modern facts put tremendous emphasis upon the ideal of the Prophet concerning the Jewish Sabbath. What was it then?

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own kindred?"

Are there many—if any—who recite the Fourth Commandment with its response in public, and then thus bring the homeless to their own homes? Do they even share their Master's compassion?

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd."

(v) The question just asked cannot, on truly Christian lines, be wholly ignored. There are doubtless many things to hinder the literal fulfilment of such an ideal, but at least this is left. It becomes part of the duty and responsibility of the Christian Church, alike in every section of it and through all its individual members, to do all that is possible to make the Sunday a restful change from the week's labour and routine, for all who lack those comforts, conveniences, and opportunities, which are so essential to happiness. Such a spirit of sympathetic unselfishness—

the very soul and substance of a Christlike character—cannot but endorse the modern plea for the opening of museums and art galleries on Sundays during the winter ; whilst in summer there is equal reason for the rendering of music in public parks, for the enjoyment of those who cannot get it at home. Sunday excursion trains and crowded chars-à-bancs have often, it may be freely acknowledged, very little of a Christian atmosphere about them. But the repellent or regrettable elements are really the mere accidents of the case. There is no natural necessity for coarseness or drunken revelry. There may be, and often is, quite as pure and happy enjoyment of fresh air and social intercourse in a char-à-banc, as in a private motor-car. The only difference is that the special comforts of the latter are due to wealth ; and the crowding of the former, to comparative poverty. But assuredly poverty is no disqualification in the sight of Him who had not “ where to lay His head.” The plain and incontrovertible Christian principle is, that whatever possibilities there may be in modern civilization for a weekly interval of rest and enjoyment after the toil, or drudgery, or monotony, of preceding days, they ought to be, so far as is capable of arrangement, equally shared by all, without respect of persons or position. At present, confessedly, humanity is a long, long way from such a consummation. But that at least is one of the benedictions contemplated in the “ Kingdom of Heaven ” which Jesus proclaimed.

(vi) And yet, human nature being what it is, there cannot but be sometimes as real a call for opposition as for sympathy, when the manner of Sunday observance is under consideration. The modern world is, alas, so far from being Christian, that there are vast numbers in our population who “ neither fear God nor regard man,” but will do anything for mere animal or sensational enjoyment, or selfish gain. Amid all the inevitable differences of opinion,

taste, and temperament, for which due allowance must be made, there are certainly some things which, even apart from the lofty ethics or spiritual ideals of Christian faith, are more or less definitely objectionable on moral or social grounds. In spite of all the cynical criticisms of avowed Agnostics, and the gibes of "Rationalists," the Christian Church must stand fast on behalf of all that is happiest, noblest, and worthiest, as against their opposites. There can be no worthier, broader, nobler standard of conduct, be a man's creed—or no-creed—what it may, than that of the Apostle in his letter to the Philippians :

"As my last word, brothers—whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just or pure, winsome or highly esteemed, if there be real nobility anywhere, or anything truly commendable, take all such things into full account."¹

Such a standard, honestly applied to Sunday observance, cannot but be opposed, strongly and persistently, to some modern manifest tendencies which are unworthy and unhelpful, sometimes positively degrading. Thus the unlimited opening of shops for trade ; the continuance of really unnecessary labour for mere profit ; the indiscriminate performances at theatres and cinemas, with unrestricted facilities for obtaining liquor ; may be unhesitatingly pronounced injurious to the whole community, as well as to the higher welfare of the individual. As a matter of plain fact, every Sunday, 40,000 shops are open in London alone ; and in all England 250,000. Whilst 86,720 public-houses and drinking-clubs are open—that is, twice as many as there are churches and chapels. Thirteen Sunday newspapers are on sale in London every Sunday morning, with an average circulation of 13,000,000. Every Sunday evening, half a million people in London alone, are found in cinemas where all the usual films of romance and comedy are shown. It is quite true that all who are thus repre-

¹ Phil. iv. 8.

sented cannot be forced into accepting Christian ideals or beliefs. To attempt that would be worse than useless, as well as unjustifiable from the Christian standpoint. And yet, by all the truth there is in the Gospel of Christ, those who avowedly follow Him are bound to use all the influence they possess, in counteracting all attempts to flood civilization with sheer Godlessness, and drown in open desecration of the Lord's Day all the efforts of the Churches to purify and ennoble human society. It is often said that our law-making authorities cannot legislate in advance of public opinion. Hence it is manifestly the duty of all who cherish the ideals of Christ's Kingdom, to seize every opportunity for helping in the right direction, by every means in their power.

(vii) What then, it will doubtless be asked, about the usual games, such as golf, cricket, tennis, football, on Sunday, whether in public or private grounds? It is a growing question which cannot be stifled, and must not be shirked. These cannot be said to be immoral, or degrading. There is no Christian warrant for calling them sinful. In themselves there is no wrong; and certainly there are not two standards of morality or spirituality, so that what is right on Saturday becomes wrong on Sunday. There is something to be said for the ideal of Rome, or Anglicans like Keble—Mass or Matins on Sunday morning, and any reasonable and innocent recreation during the rest of the day. It would seem as if the worst that could be said of Sunday games is that they run counter to Christian custom in the Evangelical churches.

But that is, as hinted above, not the whole case. The Apostle had ample reason for writing to the Corinthians that—"All things are lawful unto me, but not all things are expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." In an ever-increasing number of cases, this last suggestion of the Apostle is

unquestionably timely. For like the everywhere-manifest modern smoking mania, all these games seem to have obtained during recent years, complete mastery over their devotees. We will presently consider the whole matter of sports ; so here need only point out that there are at least four reasons for pronouncing these games on the Lord's Day as truly inexpedient, as they may be lawful.

(a) For almost all players there are now during the week so many opportunities, that it cannot be in any sense necessary to continue them on Sunday. (b) They certainly jar upon the tenderest feelings of many others, and spoil for them the sacredness of the day, as well as set a decidedly unhelpful example to all children. For (c) it cannot be denied that they do contribute to a tendency which in these days needs no helping, namely, to put the physical above the moral, and the sensational above the spiritual. So it is that the ancient tragedy of Esau, in recklessly selling his birthright for the passing enjoyment of a meal, is repeated on an enormous scale in modern civilization, as every city testifies. (d) In the case of the Lord's Day, the inexpediency of these games comes to be really indistinguishable from desecration. For when the real reasons for regarding Sunday as the Lord's Day are apprehended, the introduction of sports amounts inevitably to something like contempt for them. The tragedy of Calvary seems not worth remembering ; the triumph of the Resurrection becomes a comparative trifle ; whilst all that follows from these great foundations of Christian belief, is practically dismissed as not worth considering. Thus there is no such sense of inexpediency or inappropriateness as might otherwise be both reasonably and religiously expected.

On a lower scale it would be visible enough. There is no moral evil in cracking jokes or dancing a hornpipe at a funeral. But every one present with any mind or heart would resent it, and would much rather approve of the

tender reverence of the man in the street who bares his head as the dark cortège passes him. The whole nation would rise in indignation if it were proposed to play ping-pong on the "unknown warrior's" grave in Westminster Abbey; or if some man started to sing comic songs during the sacred two minutes' silence of Armistice Day. But unless all Christianity is based on delusion, Calvary means infinitely more than any funeral; and the light of the Resurrection morn is of immeasurably greater import to humanity, than all the armistices that were ever signed or ever will be. The real and deep soul-appreciation of all that the death and rising again of Jesus signify to mankind, does not indeed require that the day which specially calls these to mind, should be spent in wearisome services or dull monotony. But there is such a thing as spiritual decency, and heart consistency. In refined life it is always expected that the family or guests will dress for dinner. If the father with his working son came in unwashed without changing their "overalls," there would be no wickedness in it. But such garments, however honourable elsewhere, would be decidedly out of place at that time. If in all the lesser affairs of daily life the fitness of things is always acknowledged, assuredly it should also be in the highest of all relations, and in regard to the holiest of all memories. Games, at their proper time and place, are good and healthful, happy and useful. But when they overstep their bounds, and claim both to rule through all the week—as in some cases apparently they do—and then also on the Christian Day of days, to crowd out all sacredness, and reduce it to the level of the playground or tennis court or football field, and nothing more, then they are usurpers, and should be dethroned in the name of all that the true benediction of Christ's Kingdom means to humanity.

(viii) At the same time, whilst discouraging all

unchristian or anti-Christian tendencies, and cultivating wide sympathy with every effort to make Sunday truly enjoyable for the greatest number, irrespective of belief or position, it is decidedly incumbent on the churches to make their own public services more attractive. As a rule, with not too many exceptions, there is ample room for improvement, alike as to the preaching, the use of music, the form of service, the general atmosphere of kindly fellowship, and the warmth of welcome extended to strangers. A rigid stereotyped liturgical method, never varying by a hair's-breadth from the beaten track, may please those who are content to run in their religious groove and do not want to be troubled either to think or to feel. But if a Christian Church is anything more than an esoteric society, or an ecclesiastical nursery, if it has any sympathy at all with the message of Jesus, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," then there is crying need for something more than "three hymns and a sermon," if outsiders are to be wooed and won for that Kingdom. Especially when, as alas too often, the hymns do not bear thinking about, the "lessons" read are utterly inapplicable, and the sermon is but a long, wearisome recital of pious platitudes. Then in the afternoon, whilst Sunday schools are happily being improved in their care for the young, there is in most cases a splendid opportunity for appealing to a wider, older audience, in meetings where a larger outlook and freer atmosphere than in the morning or evening, permit dealing with many timely themes on Christian lines, by well-known men who are not professional clerics. Out of such assemblies, in hundreds of cases, brotherhoods and sisterhoods have developed which have been means of unmeasured good.

Yet another opportunity remains. The method which I advocated thirty years ago, and constantly maintained, has certainly proved a most useful means both of attraction

and instruction, fraught with lasting good. It is simply to copy the method of Christ Himself and the Apostles—as well as that of our missionaries abroad—in inviting all who choose, to remain for a while after the evening service, for further conversational discussion of the subjects considered in the preceding discourses. Those who lightly dismiss such a suggestion as an “innovation,” conveniently forget that Jesus Himself was the greatest innovator the religious world has ever known; and that He was therein followed by Paul, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, and a noble army of others. Dr. Orchard, well known as the King’s Weigh House preacher, said the other day with public emphasis :

“A great deal of the preaching in the Free Churches is about nothing at all. A more direct style is needed which gets down to a man’s conscience and reason and soul, and there should be more instruction. It is certain that after hearing hundreds of sermons, most people remain entirely ignorant of what the Christian faith really is.”

Experience amply proves the truth of this criticism—though not for the Free Churches only. Quite as much—or generally more—for the Anglican and Romish Churches. Thousands of outsiders who care little for the Churches, and nothing for sermons, will come and listen attentively—this is proved by prolonged experience—if they are assured that their own questions, or difficulties, will afterwards be met with courtesy, candour, and sympathy. Such a method doubtless means more pains and patience for the preacher; but what is he for, if not to emulate the example of his Master who “went up into the synagogue and taught”? Let it be said with all gentleness and charity, but said for truth’s sake it must be, that one real and great reason why on Sundays so many churches are half empty, or worse, is that there is nothing, or next to nothing, to attract the shrewd “man in the street”; or the better

educated young men and women of to-day ; or the wearied and worried business man who needs both stimulus and guidance in higher affairs. The monotonous routine of the "worship" tires him ; and the sermon which is read to him simply sends him to sleep ; whilst the spoken address tries his patience by its pietistic platitudes or far-away ecclesiastical meanderings. Small wonder that so many are conspicuous by their absence from "Church," and the Lord's Day becomes to them a dreary dullness, calling to be filled up with games and cinemas.

(ix) Let us attempt a final summary of the whole case. When the best that Christian wisdom and devotion can devise is applied to the public services of the Churches, it yet remains that the final and most effective way in which Christian believers can help the hallowing of the first day of the week, is by living what they profess during all the other days. Practising is better than preaching, and character tells more than hymns or anthems. According to Christ's "royal law," there are two Great Commands—love to God as our Father, and love to our fellow-men as our brothers. If only, aye verily, IF ONLY, these were recognized and obeyed, all other difficulties would disappear. Not in a moment, confessedly ; nor in one generation. The Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus said, "comes not with observation," that is as a sudden, celestial, spectacular flash. That is but the dream of the sincere though mistaken pietist. Christ's Kingdom *can* only come as His two Great Commands are heeded.

The happy hallowing of the Lord's Day should certainly be a most real, great, precious, and potent opportunity for helping to bring to pass the first of these commands. But unless such spiritual efforts are supported, illustrated, by the equal observance of the second, they will fail to impress this confused, dissatisfied, self-seeking age. And yet, all history and all observation go to show that the

only way to overcome the seeming impossibility of the second, is when the first becomes its true and sufficient dynamic. "True and sufficient"? Yes! For not only is there the Apostolic reminder, "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also," but the definite avowal, "We love, because He first loved us." And this is borne out in actual fact, wherever the Gospel of Jesus is realized. The statement may be made without hesitation, that there is no man in Christendom who truly keeps the first, as Jesus gives it to us, who does not also keep the second, to the blessing of his whole environment. In a world where such an ideal moved all hearts and ruled all lives, all days morally and spiritually would indeed be alike. But the real Christian would still rejoice to hallow the first day of the week above all the rest, as being verily his Lord's Day. Not merely his holiday from the burdens and cares of the week, but his holyday; filled with ever-deepening appreciation of all that the once crucified but now living Jesus means to him, to his dear ones, and to all around him. It will always be his glad privilege to prove how on that Day earth may be at its best, and Heaven itself draw nearest.

12. SPORTS

It is a paradox but true, that in these days there is no more serious subject than amusements. Sports, or recreations, to put it euphemistically, have now become such an enormous part of our national life, that no public teacher, least of all a Christian advocate, can avoid noticing and estimating their influence both on individuals and on the nation at large. Viewed as a whole, this vast modern development may be welcomed as an advantage. But there are many reasons for closer consideration. There is indeed unmeasured room for a deliberate and careful

caveat. Some thirty years ago, in a book entitled *Sports from the Christian Standpoint*, really written to embalm the memory of the noblest young Christian sportsman I ever knew, I found it necessary to say :

“ It seems confessedly a quixotic task to attempt to influence the world of Sports. In its mighty modern on-rush any effort to reason with it appears full oft like trying to converse wisely in a hurricane, or discourse sweet music to a westerly gale. When each week's surging crowds are estimated and the whole manifest sporting tendency of our day is measured, it is small wonder that many earnest Christian folk should cry to their teachers—Perceive ye how you prevail nothing ; the whole world is gone after amusement.”

But that estimate has to be multiplied, magnified, many times, to express at all what has happened since. Mr. Joseph M'Cabe, who will not be accused of any leaning to pietism, uttered not long since at South Place, a timely and impressive protest :

“ There is more appalling frivolity in England to-day than at any other time in her history. To-day the great mass of civilized humanity makes this jeering answer to all the philosophies in the world—‘ We are going to enjoy ourselves.’ The modern ideal seems to be four hours' work, eight hours' sleep, and twelve hours' play.”

This grave indictment is only too largely supported by facts.

The causes for such a hedonistic development are many. Thirty years ago the following was true, as I then wrote :

“ The wear and tear of nerve and brain on the part of employers through increasing business cares, demands rest under pain of madness or death. Whilst the ceaseless development of the principle of the division of labour, in relation to the employed, drives myriads more and more to that monotonous piece-work which turns a man into a fraction of a machine and leaves him a worn and weary prey to depression if not despair. The devil of dullness is quite as deadly a foe to human nobility as the fiend of animal passion.”

But that also has become much more intensely and indeed tragically true. Reaction from the horrors of the late

horrible war, increased anxieties of workers, and even greater troubles of the unemployed, have combined to create in the minds of myriads a craving for some kind of relief, which, in the form of sports of all kinds, has grown from more to more beyond all precedent. It is this exceeding growth which means so much to the Christianity of the future.

The many forms of recreative enjoyment may be roughly divided into indoor and outdoor ; the former being generally known as "amusements," and the latter as "sports." Football, cricket, tennis, golf, racing, boxing, are regarded as sports—though the last named is mostly carried on in some building—whilst dancing, theatres, music-halls, cinemas, balls, whist drives, and other card games, are accounted amusements. They constitute an enormous, complex, indescribable whole, which quite justifies Mr. M'Cabe's estimate just quoted, and can only truthfully be termed a modern mania. Last year (1925), no less than 1,075,875,000 attendances were registered at cinemas—what number of visits to theatres and music-halls that suggests, may be left to the reader's imagination. As to outdoor sports, the crowds which now gather for football, cricket, and tennis, are incalculable. The most manifest and reliable indication of the enormous hold which sports now have upon the public mind, is found in the daily Press. There are more than one hundred and sixty daily papers in the United Kingdom. There is no doubt that they all, in proportion to their circulation, follow the example of the great London dailies. These have every day, on the average, from ten to fifteen whole columns given up to "sporting news." It is worth a moment's pause to think what that means in the course of the year—to say nothing of the issue, in millions, of the papers which openly style themselves "sporting papers," and exist for nothing else. All these numberless columns would never

be printed if such papers did not sell. And they would never sell, were it not for the insatiable craving to which they pander.

In this whole matter three unmistakable certainties at once confront us: (i) This enormous development of the sports craving is as irresistible as it is manifest. (ii) It is growing continually greater; and now with the advent of "wireless," whereby the B.B.C. issues every evening an elaborate list of sporting events, its further enlargement is as sure as incalculable. (iii) The influence of this measureless, ceaseless, increasing craving upon our whole national life, morally and spiritually as well as socially, is as unquestionable as immeasurable. The change which has come to pass in these respects during the last fifty years, is indeed astounding. It has resulted from the generally changed modern atmosphere, together with the vast increase in population, the wonderful facilities for travel, and the marvellous means for the immediate communication of news through the Press. It goes without saying that all this must have some effect upon Christian Churches and the ideals which they exist to foster. In view of the future, only an outline can here be presented of their reciprocal attitude. But a few points may be worth careful statement. There is no necessary opposition between Christian faith and the natural desire of a normal healthy man, or woman, or child, for the relief of recreations or the enjoyment of sports. But there must be some discrimination; and there are positive principles to be maintained. It may also be shown that such principles, if followed, would bring real gain; and that there is nothing impossible in adopting such an ideal.

Let us look at these items a little more carefully.

I. Christianity has nothing whatever to say against any sports or amusements which bring about real recreation of mind or body. The fanatic abuse of the body which

at one time prevailed, and its relics in the ecclesiastical asceticism of some ideals of spiritual discipline, together with the contemptuous contradiction of all natural instincts accompanying some forms of piety, are all as far from the Gospel of Christ as the "evangelical" emphasis upon "soul saving" to the neglect of all else. Great part of the modern aloofness or even alienation from Christian Churches, is undoubtedly due to the fanatic avowals of some of their representatives. Only a few years since, a well-known Baptist minister issued a small booklet which obtained a wide circulation, entitled *The Devil's Mission of Amusement*, in which, amongst other wild assertions, it was declared that Christian Churches had nothing else to do than to "save those who had nothing but the thickness of their ribs between their souls and hell." And great numbers in the Churches hailed it as a true "Gospel message." Two unfortunate misrepresentations in the 1611 version of the New Testament, have contributed to the misunderstanding of the Christian attitude. Paul did not say contemptuously, in 1 Tim. iv. 8, that "bodily exercise profiteth little." Nor did he add the last seven words in the A.V. of 1 Cor. vi. 20. They were but the opinion of a Gnostic copyist. But the indolence of religious conventionalism has caused the persistent reading of these blunders in public, where the hearers know no better. For such false impressions the New Testament is not responsible. The true Apostolic ideal is succinctly but unmistakably expressed in the Apostle's prayer for the Thessalonians—"May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." His indignant protest to the Corinthians—"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?"—ought to have prevented the opposition, and sometimes denunciation, with which the whole modern tendency in the

direction of sports has not seldom been met by Christian people.

II. It must, however, be acknowledged that there is a very real necessity for discrimination. "In malice be babes, but in mind be men," is a central Christian principle. It applies here with a threefold protest. First, against all voluntary association with moral evil; then, against undue excess in quantity when pure quality is unquestioned; also, against such engrossment in lower enjoyments as would exclude the true appreciation and cultivation of the higher. These merit careful recognition.

1. Christianity sets its face as a flint against the spoiling of recreations or the degrading of sports, by their contamination with moral evils. The possibility and indeed actuality of such contamination, is only too easily illustrated. The association of sports with gambling, excessive drinking, and the mob tendencies to coarse excitement, with lawless behaviour, is manifest continually. The degree of such association certainly varies. As a rule, tennis, cricket, golf, cycling, and ordinary gymnastics, are free from these blemishes—but not the rest. There is little if any betting at tennis; not much at cricket, or golf. But there is plenty at football, still more at boxing, and most of all in connection with racing. It is really necessary to consider these separately.

(i) This last is certainly the worst of all, in every respect. Details of the vast sums of money involved can be found elsewhere. But the statement of Canon Peter Green that "bookmakers"—surely the most deservedly sarcastic name in human speech—took out of the pockets of the public £250,000,000 in one year, is based on the figures from the "Board of Inland Revenue." The whole case against the racing mania may be summarized in a few impartial words. The *Spectator* cannot be accused of pietism, but its estimate, some time since, was plain enough:

“Taken altogether, we can imagine no kind of game which is so hopelessly demoralizing for every one concerned in it, as betting on the turf. And as we cannot imagine that horse-racing can exist without it, we may be forgiven for failing to appreciate the benefit which this national ‘pastime’ confers upon the nation.”

Charles Kingsley was certainly no narrow-minded fanatic; but what was his opinion? Referring to the “Derby” and its inseparable gambling, he wrote:

“It is of all habits the most intrinsically savage. Morally, it is unchivalrous and unchristian; the devil only is the father of it. Those who are in any way associated with the turf as it is, incur a fearful responsibility.”

The Times newspaper, which is assuredly not pietistic, speaks with authority to the same effect:

“Horse-racing is an amusement to which is directly traceable more misery, more ruin, more demoralization, than to any other pastime. It is unnecessary to insist upon the manifold evils of the gambling spirit, the ruined houses, the broken hearts, the blackened characters for which it is responsible, and the demoralizing effect upon the intelligence and the sympathies of the people, of this wild and absorbing passion for swift and unearned gains.”

Examples of this last phrase are just to hand. Under the heading of “lucky wins,” the daily paper mentions quite casually that in connection with the “Lincoln” winner, a “well-known cricketer—whose wife suggested pricking the lists of runners with a pin—is the richer by £2500; an eighteen-year-old boy of Llanelly wins £2525; a Liverpool business man won £4000; nearly £25,000 will be distributed to winners of Liverpool sweepstakes.” No comment is needed as to the effects upon the winners, of these “unearned gains.” The effect upon wrecked sailors of drinking the salt-water, is well known and constitutes a true analogy. Much else which would be utterly true must go unsaid. In plain speech, horse-racing has not one redeeming feature. The notion of its being an incentive

to the breeding of the best horses for purposes of agriculture and transport, is simply lying camouflage. The whole thing is but an orgy of wild excitement, colossal selfishness, brutal passion, consummate villainy, and shameful waste, with outrageous luxury on the part of the rich, and miserable temptation for the poor. Those who care to face the justification for such an estimate can find it either by personal observation on the spot, or in many publications whose truthfulness is beyond cavil.¹

This mania is said to be the "sport of kings." It is much more their disgrace. It is the association with royalty and "aristocracy," which spreads the evil. It is but the prostitution of wealth, position, and privilege, to take the leading part in customs which do not deserve the name of "sports," having nothing good to recommend them, and serving only as the hotbed of all kinds of evil. As to cleansing the racecourse from its evils, the Herculean task of cleansing the Augean stables was but a trifle comparatively. Only a few weeks ago the celebrated Doncaster races were held as usual, and it is announced that in order to keep the peace, 350 policemen, with 34 detectives, mounted policemen and ambulance men were required.²

¹ Four may here be mentioned in passing: *Betting and Gambling*, by Major Churchill; *Betting and Gambling a National Evil*, by B. S. Rowntree; *The Problem of Gambling*, by E. B. Perkins (Epworth Press); *Gambling and Betting*, by R. H. Charles (T. & T. Clark).

² The following notice in this week's Press merits close regard, as showing how the miserable gambling craze is ready to crop up anywhere at any time and under any pretence:

"A letter from a prominent member of the Manchester Free Church Council, read at the executive meeting of the National Council in London on Friday, showed how fertile in invention is the enterprising 'bookie.' A Manchester novelty is so-called 'Greyhound Races.' Dogs chase a mechanical toy hare. The 'sport' has become a rage. The writer of the letter visited the grounds, and was told that ten to fifteen thousand had paid gate-money, and that as much as £900 a night was made on three nights of the week.

Not much less can be said truthfully, as to the particular sport of the wealthy called hunting. There is naturally less room for coarser vices, but it is all the same a costly, cruel, destructive opportunity for mere excitement; with nothing to recommend it, save the physical exercise of a privileged few. This applies to fox-hunting. The former pastime of stag-hunting, is happily less common in these days. Its miserable cruelty did indeed cry shame on all who took part in it.

(ii) During recent years the game of football has become so popular as to rival, or even exceed, racing, in numbers and influence. It is happily free from most of the villainies and degradations of racing, and might be a really harmless and healthful sport, if it were not for the gambling curse which now contaminates it, and seems to be in so many cases inseparable from it. It is more than a quarter of a century since Lord Kinnauld wrote to *The Times* to protest that football was being ruined by betting. Twenty years later, Sir R. Peacock, Chief Constable of Manchester, openly declared that now there would be no football, if there were no gambling attached to it. Such estimates could be overwhelmingly substantiated. In these days football has become a veritable young man's mania. In some respects this might be to the good. It is far better that our parks and recreation-grounds should swarm with youthful enthusiasts for football, whether "rigger" or "soccer," than that these latter should be loafing about the streets, or be drawn into some of the many oppor-

Everywhere the 'bookies' were doing a roaring trade. There are six 'races,' which occupy altogether about twenty-five minutes. The bulk of the time is occupied in taking bets, and paying—if the backers win. There were literally hundreds booking bets. Wives were sending husbands, mothers sons, and a group of girls sent one of their number to engage in a 'flutter' on their behalf, but young men gamblers were most in evidence. £15,000 has been spent on the course by the promoters of the enterprise."

tunities for mischief which abound in our great cities. It is in some of the later stages of its development that harmless football becomes a harmful menace, and that which might be pure, healthy enjoyment, sinks into sheer animal excitement and moral degradation. The increasing growth of professionalism has opened the door for all kinds of abuses, and put a premium upon the betting craze which has become the mad accompaniment of all important "matches." By millions of "coupons" and ubiquitous sweepstake tickets, the gambling plague is spreading everywhere. Sir R. Peacock's estimate, a dozen years ago, was that football coupons in Manchester alone represented at least £7000 per week. How much more now, not only there but throughout the country, is incalculable. The increase is simply appalling. And when, as recently, 200,000 men gather for one match, the contemplation of its accompaniments becomes anything but encouraging, for those who wish to see real helpful and healthy sports grow for the benefit of the whole nation. If Christian Churches did nothing else than protest and contend against such possible ruination of what might be a vast benediction, they would render immense service to the nation and to humanity.

(iii) Amongst so-called "sports," of late years, boxing has assumed a leading place. Under the guise of the "noble art of self-defence"—which is sheer camouflage—it gathers thousands of witnesses every week. But Christian faith and Christian principle are bound to put it on the same level as racing. Its patronage by royalty and the "aristocracy," neither confers upon it any real worth, nor redeems it from brutality. All that here follows is based upon direct observation, as well as upon authentic reports. As for the betting curse which is never absent from its public displays, there is to it neither measure nor end. Every boxing match is a seething ocean of betting. Some years

ago Sir Conan Doyle, writing on behalf of the "Prize Ring," was constrained to say that :

" If the ring has fallen low, it is not in the main the fault of the men who have done the fighting ; but it lies at the door of the vile crew of ringside parasites and ruffians who are as far below the honest pugilist, as the welsher and the blackleg are below the noble racehorse which serves them as a pretext for their villainies."

The implications of that avowal are more than sufficient for every Christian thinker. How much more might truly be said concerning the " vile crew," all the papers bear witness. But even if we ignore it, and for the moment overlook the betting mania which is never absent, where in plain question is the vaunted " nobility " to which even public speakers, teachers, and sometimes even preachers, refer ? I, for one, challenge the whole popular glamour, and assert that it is impossible to justify it from any Christian standpoint whatever. " The men who have done the fighting," says Sir Conan, with a tone of high approval. But why, in the name of manhood and of common sense, even apart from religion, should there be any " fighting " at all ? It is the sheer cant of animalism to talk of its generating skill, courage, and endurance. There are a myriad other and better ways in which these virtues can be learned and practised, without sinking to the level of the primeval savage and the beasts of the jungle. It may and undoubtedly does appeal to the lower passions of human nature ; but it is at once the solemn duty and high privilege of Christianity to protest, with all possible emphasis, against such degradation. To strip two men, who have no quarrel with each other, as near to absolute nakedness as decency permits, and then call upon them to bruise, and batter, and injure, the human body which normally is the most wonderful and beautiful thing on earth, until it becomes a bloody mass of disfigurement, and call it " noble sport," is nothing less than a ghastly lie,

which ought to be held in utmost detestation by every sane man, and most of all by every Christian. Those who have been present, as I have, at such exhibitions, will know both from the spectacle itself and the character of the audience, how to estimate the brutalizing effect of such displays.

But it may seem to some reader that the above denunciation is too strong. Let us, therefore, take from the Press accounts which are served up for universal consumption, just a few specimens of what transpires. Some little time ago there was a staged fight between a British "Joe Beckett," and an American "Frank Moran," of course for a "heavy purse," and the championship. Whole columns were filled with nauseating details of each "round." For the truth's sake, let us note one or two of these :

"At the third round Moran was against the ropes, he was on the ground, and his face was red with blood ; Beckett was tottering about the ring. In the fourth round, Beckett got a thick ear, and he was against the ropes, while the giant American's face was a lake of blood. I looked round at the women, the thin and lovely women in flimsy dresses ; they seemed to be enjoying themselves. Then in the fifth round, how they tottered and bled as they struck. Those who had paid to see blood, saw plenty of it. Moran, midway in the fourth round was very gory, the result of a gash beneath his left eye. Then, in the sixth round I saw Beckett lowering by the ropes, the referee prancing about, and the veteran American plunging blindly about the ring, both his eyes effectually closed, blinded with blood and pain and weariness, battered and beaten. The fluttering of a bloodstained towel into the ring—a great roar—women clapping—men yelling. Ah, yes, a good fight that was."

Some time after, the public were similarly regaled with details of the Carpentier-Siki fight. Here is the summary as to the former :

"The punishment Carpentier received from Siki was really awful. Battered, bleeding, and blinded, towards the end he showed wonderful pluck and capacity for resistance. When he was finally floored, he presented a pitiable, dazed, contorted figure, and it was at

least ten minutes before he could be carried out by one of his attendants."

A few days ago the papers announced, in huge type—such as they have never once employed concerning any religious or social effort for humanity's good—that 130,000 spectators saw "Tunney's great win—Jack Dempsey well beaten—ex-champion's pathetic effort—battered fighter evades a knock-out." Then, column after column of details similar to those above. "A savage fight. Struggle described round by round." Thus :

"Dempsey drew first blood from Tunney's mouth, and then forced him to the ropes. He was in a frenzy, and again knocked Tunney to the ropes with a right body blow, and then caught him with two rights to the jaw. Round three Dempsey clinched, and Tunney hit him with rights and lefts to the head, and subsequently staggered him with a right uppercut to the jaw. Dempsey was bleeding from nose and mouth, but fighting like a madman, he nearly floored Tunney with a right and left to the head and a terrific punch in the stomach. Dempsey opened Tunney's right eye in round seven with a left hook. Then he took a terrific right swing to the jaw. Dempsey was rocked to his heels with another left hook to the body. His right eye was dripping blood. The crowd roared uproariously for Tunney at the last round. He at once pressed Dempsey to the ropes, and had him on the edge of a knock-out. Dempsey's left eye was entirely closed, and with Tunney furiously belabouring him Dempsey could hardly stand on his feet."

The above are only truncated specimens of the ghastly brutality which thousands of men and women love to see, and which is served up to millions in daily papers, as illustrations of a "noble art." The 130,000 who witnessed it, paid two million dollars in gate-money.¹ If as sane

¹ If this estimate should seem to some readers too severe, the following notes from the American paper, *The New Republic*, are sufficiently significant for reply: "During the two weeks preceding 23rd September the *New York Times*, which does not specialize in news about prize-fights, published some 1800 inches of type about

human beings we are to follow Carlyle's advice, and "clear our minds of cant," it is sheer cant to call such exhibitions of brutality "noble." They are, in plain fact, barbarous, disgusting, degrading reversions to savagery; and are no more necessary or helpful to true manliness, than it is wise or necessary to face a blizzard unclothed, in order to harden oneself. All talk about boxing being desirable as a training in self-defence, is sheer rubbish. Any weakling who wished to injure his fellow, if armed with a revolver, would be more than a match for the cleverest pugilist that ever lived. As a matter of fact, "Battling Siki," who so battered Carpentier, was recently murdered in that way in New York. The truest training to noblest manhood consists not in fighting, but in learning how to avoid or prevent fighting, which is, after all, the method of the jungle.

In regard to indoor amusements it would seem as if something ought to be said about cards, and the unmeasured possibilities of gambling and deceit so often associated with

the pending battle." What does it all amount to? "People who suffer from the lack of anything heroic or thrilling in their own experience work themselves into a frenzy over the dubious and necessarily brutal efforts of two professional bruisers to knock each other out." "They invent means of wagering their goods or their feelings on the skill, the endurance, the injuries, the bloodshed, the defeats, and the victories of professional gamblers and gladiators."

"Nevertheless the way in which our fellow-countrymen now chew the cud of a fight for the heavy-weight championship is a new social fact whose processes and consequences deserve to be watched. It is new because it involves a longer and more voluminous leakage of emotional energy than ever before, and because the promotion of occasions for this dissipation has become enormously profitable for so many thousands of people. A people who pay two million dollars to witness a fight for a title, and an indefinite number of millions in tiresome and futile verbal mastication of dubious information about its income, are spending their economic surplus to cheapen their own lives."

them. It will, of course, be said that there is no harm in a game of whist. Which may be just as false as true. All depends upon the players and their environment. But even when there is no risk of gambling or trickery, it certainly seems a very unworthy way of securing funds for Church purposes, to invite all and sundry to come to a "whist drive." Those whom we try in vain to draw into Christian fellowship in worship and service, are not likely to have any spiritual desires created by such methods.

2. Even when sports and amusements are purged of all association with moral evil, and so become wholesome, healthy, happy means of recreation, there is yet need for watchfulness from the Christian standpoint. There may be real harm in quantity no less than in quality. It is sheer excess which often turns virtue into vice. The best may by excess become the worst. Even as a pinch of salt with food saves it from insipidity, and a spoonful of sugar with tea or coffee makes them more palatable. Whilst a heap of it would in either case create nausea, and be injurious. So one may say, with all sympathy, that cricket, golf, tennis, football, may be free from all harmful taint, and yet in their very enjoyableness become temptations to folly. They are splendid servants, but costly and tyrannic masters. There is no cynicism but simple truth to fact in pointing out how often, and how easily, any one of these sports does become a veritable craze, which, by its insatiable demands, leaves little or no time or disposition for anything else. There are literally thousands of young men in the land who apparently think of and care for nothing but football. Much the same must be said concerning the rush on the part of young women for dancing indoors, and tennis in the open. No one can bring against either of these a charge of innate harmfulness. But the extent to which in these days such enjoyments tend to rule out all higher thoughts or worthier occupations, is

manifest to every careful observer. As for the "pictures"—we are all children enough to enjoy them. But the crowds which continually now throng into the cinemas, cause some grave apprehensions as to whither this overwhelming attraction is tending. One has but to know something of London and its life after dark, taking into full account the number of its theatres and music-halls, with their never-failing vast attendances, to realise how tremendous a factor in modern life is the craving for sensational delights. Against such enjoyments in themselves, Christianity has no charge to bring. But when they become the ruling engrossment of life and the only occupation of the hours which are free from work, there is both room and need for all the restraining and guiding influences of reason and religion.

III. When we pass in thought from checks or prohibitions to positive principles, what has Christianity to suggest, or what should the Churches of the future take as the ideal they desire to enforce? Detailed rules would be as useless as uncalled for. But it should be possible to emphasize, and help to make effective, two conditions upon which Christianity insists, if sports and amusements are to be real benedictions and genuine recreations both for body and mind.

1. For the true Christian, sports at their best and utmost are but a means to an end. To acknowledge this does not rob them of their charm, but makes them to be a certain boon instead of a possible bane. They become helps instead of hindrances to that all-round character, the development of body, soul, and spirit, which the Gospel of Christ contemplates and desires for every human being. As soon as amusements or sports become an end in themselves, they tend to become dangers rather than benedictions, masters instead of servants. That way lies moral anarchy as well as spiritual decline. Of sports in relation

to character, that which Tennyson wrote concerning the relation between knowledge and wisdom, very truly applies :

“ Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail
Against her beauty ? May she mix
With men and prosper. Who shall fix
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire,
She sets her forward countenance,
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

. . . Let her know her place,
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain ; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child.”

One has but to substitute the modern rightful enjoyment of sports and appreciation of innocent amusements, for the poet's “ Knowledge,” to feel at once the truth and force of his comparison.

2. There must be no mistake as to the end to which all kinds of recreation are to be the means. It is not merely the *mens sana in corpore sano* which is so often and so rightly contemplated. It is all that, but something more. A sound mind in a sound body is unquestionably good ; but Christianity stands for more ; even that which Paul expressed in his Corinthian letter—“ Glorify God, therefore, in your body.” It must be confessed that to ordinary ears that phrase, “ Glorify God,” is, if the truth be told, much rather repellent than attractive. But the repulsion is due to the ecclesiastical routine of rites and ceremonies and forms and conventions, in which it has all too long been enwrapped. When Jesus prayed, “ Father, glorify

Thy name," He meant something very different from all such obfuscations. A father is glorified when his children love him, trust him, serve him, keep him in constant remembrance. And that is the ideal of the true Christian life, whether in work or at play. It is the crowding out of all thoughts of God as Father, the ignoring of all that Christ means for humanity as well as for the individual, that provoke the protest of Christianity against so much that now passes by the name of "sports." The average "sportsman," in these days, will not approve of any such reminder; but at least he must acknowledge that until the New Testament is shown to be worthless, the Christian Church can do no other. It is impossible either to mistake, or to limit, the Apostolic injunction—"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." When the "glory of God" is redeemed from its ecclesiastical distortion, and rightly apprehended, that is, truly appreciated as being no more and no less than the sympathetic yearning of a father over his children for their good, it becomes the warm sunshine of every realm of life—not the chilly fog of enslavement to ritual and rubrics. Such an ideal will sometimes be costly, in the "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," which it necessitates. But be the cost what it may, by that ideal Christianity stands or falls; and in urging its adoption through all the world of work and play alike, the Christian Church most truly represents and illustrates "salvation."

IV. Hereupon, however, another question at once arises which cannot be suppressed. What would be the practical effect of the principles just outlined, if really applied to the whole world of sports and amusements? How far from any such application the modern world is at present, needs no demonstration. It is only too manifest in all directions—the Thames on a summer Sunday, quite as much as the thousands crowded round a prize-fight in

winter. What have Christian idealists to say in reply to the cynical suggestion that it might be good for religion, but would be bad for sports? Well, at least two things, and these with a challenge to contradiction.

1. First, there would be emphatically no loss, so far as all sports and amusements that deserve the name are concerned, if every one who engages in them were, to all intents and purposes, genuinely Christian. There are plenty of Christian athletes, happily, to bear witness to that. No man or woman ever suffers any loss, either in physical or mental development, through real allegiance to Jesus Christ. For His service no more involves foolish asceticism, or straitlaced prudery, than it does slothful ease and selfish gluttony. Just as it is now determined, both by science and experience, that the Channel swimmer or the champion runner loses nothing and gains everything, by dismissing all alcohol and nicotine from use, so the loss of all those things which Christianity cannot but veto, would be no loss at all to any real sportsman.

2. But more than that must be said, with all possible emphasis. The loss thus contemplated would be positively the greatest gain and the most real help that could come to all who seriously train for sports, or seek genuine recreation. Doubtless in these days, when the drink craving and the smoking craze have the same grip upon myriads that the "old man of the sea" had upon Sindbad, it would be scornfully pronounced Puritanism to suggest a football field, or a cricket match, or a cinema without them. But the fact remains, in stubborn and undeniable experience, that those who are free from such sensational tyrannies have the best of it in every sense, and at every time. If the debilitating and costly folly of the "moderate" drinker, together with the selfishness of the average smoker—who cares nothing whether those around him are nauseated—

were all banished, by common consent, from the whole realm of amusements and sports, there would be as real a change for the better as when a gloomy fog melts into brilliant sunshine. All the scowls and sneers in civilization cannot disprove this.

V. So then we come to the last consideration, when the Christianity of the future is confronted with the tremendous and increasing force of the demand for recreations of all kinds. After all, in the foregoing have we not wandered into Utopia and lost our way? That which seems to be beyond contradiction in theory, is sometimes found to be impossible in practice. Is not Christianity in these matters just an impracticable counsel of perfection? It is a fair question, and merits a square answer. This must apparently be threefold.

1. There are confessedly enormous difficulties in what has been suggested above. They arise from different sources. This country—to say nothing of the Continent—contains a growing number of those who decline altogether to acknowledge Christian truth or accept the Christian ideal; so that for them the Christian standard brings neither attraction nor obligation. It is a free country, and they must be allowed all the influence they choose to wield. It is, however, plain enough that by whatever name they may be known, as “Rationalists,” or “Secularists,” or “Ethical Societies,” and the like, they do not get rid of the evils which manifestly spoil sports, and make them too often to be degradations rather than recreations. But there are others also, who nominally accept Christian ideals and principles, but are unwilling to pay the price which their actual and practical adoption demands. Thus then, through downright rejection on the one hand, and ineffective uncertainty on the other, it comes to pass that the Christian ideal is so often “more honoured in the breach than in the observance.” Hence human nature’s

selfishness—whether refined as at Tranby Court, or sensuous as in a London cabaret, or reckless as on the racecourse—goes unchecked, and animal passions are left more or less uncontrolled just where control is most needed ; namely, in the outbursts of energy and storms of excitement which find vent at great sporting “events.” Hence arise not only the minor jealousies and quarrels which are hushed up, but the scenes which sometimes disgrace a football field, and make the crowd returning from the racecourse one of the most pitiful sights in civilization.

2. It is thus as vain as it is easy, to talk about “Christianizing” sports by any immediate or drastic method. Any honest estimate of the actual facts suffices to show that at present there is little sign of so doing, with the promise of less in the future. There are, happily, myriads whose amusements and sports are free from moral blemish, and who do keep in view Christian standards and ideals. The hope of the future is with them. But they are outnumbered by the others to whom Christianity is nothing more than a middle-class fad, and who are restrained from what is coarse and grossly selfish and generally injurious, only by the strong arm of the law. We dare not think of a racecourse, or a big football match, without policemen and detectives. As a whole, the sporting world is Pagan. The Christianity of the future which has rightly dismissed the former doctrines of total depravity and original sin, has yet to face the actual depravity which shows that evil tendencies as well as good are the normal heritage of humanity. And these evil tendencies are strongest when men are most free. Ocean travellers know what the “racing” of the propeller means in a heavy sea. The restraint of the surrounding water is for the moment removed. But the racing must not be left to continue uncontrolled, or—ask the captain. So when the restraints of work are removed and men go to play, the enormous

energies set free need most guidance and control—and are least likely to find it in themselves.

3. That much may be done by Christian Churches in this regard is, however, proved by experience. Not merely, nor perhaps so much, by the multiplication within their pale of opportunities for healthy sports and innocent amusements, though these are of great value. But rather in three other ways: (i) By broader, that is more sympathetic as well as wiser, teaching from pulpits, in accord with the Christian Magna Charta of the Apostle mentioned above.¹ (ii) By the inculcation of a Christian character which meets all the complex difficulties, alike of business and of sports, through cultivating the experience suggested by Jesus Himself,² and proved by Paul—"I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." (iii) By continued efforts, no matter how costly in time, or patience, or persistence, or money, to influence public opinion against all that is unworthy or morally injurious; whilst supporting everything that comes within the broad and inspiring Apostolic appeal to the Philippians.

4. After all, in the end and always, it is the second of the above suggestions which signifies most, and in action tells most. Every such character—and God be thanked there are very many—is living proof that the Christian ideal is not a mere counsel of perfection, but as blessedly possible as confessedly difficult. It is character that counts for most, with men as with God. As surely as matter, even in a mountain is composed of the ultra-microscopic electrons, so beyond all doubt is the influence of Christian Churches, for every noble and holy purpose,

¹ Phil. iv. 8. See p. 264.

² Matt. xix. 26, which is not, when rightly interpreted, a bare and irrelevant assertion of divine omnipotence, but an assurance of sufficiency through divine communion. For fuller exposition see my *Reality in Bible Reading* (T. & T. Clark), p. 89.

dependent upon the characters of individual believers. One example of this, for ever impressive for me, may well close this section. The little book mentioned above, which has on its front page—"In Memoriam, W. P. P., a Christian athlete early crowned"—is not much known, so that the repetition of the story of one of the finest specimens of young Christian manhood who did embody all that is above suggested, may not be out of place. His father, Dr. J. B. Paton of Nottingham, set him indeed a noble example; for he was not only revered and beloved by all who knew him, but the pioneer of all that Christianity contemplates in brightening and sweetening the lives of workers, especially amongst the young. The influence of his "Home-Reading Union" was unmeasured, and yet remains. But as to "Willie," let me here, for Christian truth's sake, quote what I formerly wrote:

"He was more than six feet high, and when he met his tragic but heroic death, he was twenty-seven years of age. He had been as Guide in charge of a holiday party to one of our best-known seaside resorts, when the boat was upset by a sudden squall, and several of the party were drowned. He was a splendid swimmer, and could have saved himself with ease, but set himself to save others. Having helped one to safety, he seized another and was bearing her to shore, when his head struck a sunken rock and he sank. He was found calm in death with his hand tightly gripping a part of the cloak of the one he strove to save.

"The exceeding value of his life record is that he did in all things actually embody the whole of the high ideal briefly sketched above. He was a keen all-round athlete, a good cyclist, a strong and skilful swimmer, leading member of a tennis club, as well as of a Young Men's Guild and Debating Society. He organized, besides, a Boys' Club, and joined heartily in all their sports. In short, there was nothing deserving to be classed as athletics in which he was not intensely interested and capable of taking a vigorous part."

The *Liverpool Daily Press* printed a letter from one who knew him well, and said:

"A more gentle, brave, generous, and unselfish man never lived. He always made the best of everything. A total abstainer and non-smoker, the picture of robust health and strength, his bright smile and cheerful presence never failed to dispel gloom and sorrow. He often rose at 6 a.m. to ride his bicycle into distant country lanes to gather bunches of wild flowers to cheer the hearts of poor sick people in the city. Amongst business men—on the Liverpool Cotton Exchange—he was regarded as the model of an upright, straightforward, honest, true gentleman, as clever and energetic as his integrity was undoubted."

What he was, besides all that, to me personally, will not go into words. At a time when scarlet fever in its deadliest form entered my home, and laid low all my five children, robbing us of our youngest darling, when no one from the Churches would come near us, this young athlete came, defying every risk or hindrance, and when the doctor was unsympathetic and the paid nurse was drunken, he did for me and the poor exhausted mother, everything that the wisest nurse and tenderest-hearted woman could do, until all was over. The rest must go untold. But amongst all who knew him, the name of Willie Paton will never lose its fragrance, whether in the home or the Church or the Cotton Exchange. In another sphere, of greatest influence amongst young people, his brother, Mr. Lewis Paton, so long Master of the Manchester Grammar School, repeated the same noble characteristics. *O si sic omnes!* Imagine a world of Sports where characters such as these prevailed! The point here, however, is, that my dear departed friend did prove beyond all possibility of contradiction, that the Christian ideal, which some scorn and others deem impossible, is both possible and noble above all else. It is by the multiplication of such characters alone, that the Kingdom of Heaven will ever come upon earth. It is concerning such "Godliness," compared with which the coarse triumphs of the prize-ring and the wild orgies of the racecourse are as ignoble as pitiful, that the Christian

ideal which Paul set before Timothy, stands gloriously firm and deserves world-wide proclamation :

“ Train thyself like an athlete with Godliness in view. For whilst bodily training is of some real value, Godliness is valuable for everything, inasmuch as it is full of promise both for this life, and for the life that is yet to come.”

VI

EPILOGUE

THE conclusion of every serious and sincere attempt to deal with a great theme leaves the writer with a deep sense of dissatisfaction, if not of failure; so much more seems to call for expression, in order to be at once true and clear and comprehensive. Hence the incentive which Paul felt when he wrote to the Philippians, where our English "finally"¹ scarcely conveys all his meaning. In our day more than in his, one tries in vain to gather up into a few words the whole kaleidoscopic vision of the environment—scientific, sociological, and political, as well as religious—with which modern Christianity has to deal. But some certainties are unmistakable. Perhaps the most prominent is the ominously unsettled state of the nations. As Europe, one may hope, is settling down, the yellow peril in the East, fostered by Bolshevism, grows alarmingly; whilst in the West, America knows, as Europeans do not, the reality of a black peril there. Manifestly, politics and sociology are unequal to the tasks they set themselves. It is just here that the question inevitably presses—What is Christianity for, if not to pour oil on the waters of strife, and create a new world in which "righteousness and peace and joy" shall prevail?

There are indeed said to be eleven religions working for some such end, but only three of them exhibit any promise for the future. In the order of their influence and numbers of adherents, the only faiths which by their propagandism affect coming generations are, as above mentioned, Christianity with its nominal 580 millions, Islam with its

¹ Phil. iv. 8. See p. 264.

230, and Buddhism with its uncertain 150.¹ Each of these is more or less in a chaotic state. Islam and Buddhism must here be left out of account. It is more than enough to ask what Christianity is doing, on the world scale as well as at home. The preceding pages are only a small contribution based on observation and experience. It is, however, impossible to deny the real and important changes in Christian thought and doctrine during the last half-century. These developments are still in progress, and all the vehement outcries of Fundamentalism will assuredly not stop them. But there is room, one must acknowledge, for the queries of sincere and troubled believers as to where we now are in Christian faith and hope, and whither we are tending.

That there should be, must be, development in religious thought since, say, even 1870, is as natural as inevitable. Such enlargement of mind and heart is no more dangerous than growth in a healthy child. It is as natural as the growth of a shoot into a sapling, and a sapling into a tree. But although we have been told over the wireless that "growing pains" are a physiological delusion, that can hardly be said in relation to the religious realm. For there are very few things, if any, more painful to myriads of devout souls, than to be told, not that they may, but that they must, exchange old lamps for new. So it comes to pass that there are two potent hindrances to any such further developments as the growing knowledge and changing temper of the times appear, reasonably and rightfully, to demand.

On the one hand, there is the keen, persistent, implacable opposition of disbelief. Like that of Mr. Arnold Bennett,

¹ These figures are not guess-work, but based on latest scrutinized statistics. The vaster numbers often attributed to Buddhism are quite fictitious, resting largely on the fact that millions of Chinese profess three religions.

who boldly printed the avowal that "the great event of the late war was the final destruction of Christianity." The very falsity of such an estimate serves to show how cynically the wish was father to the thought. But those who are acquainted at all with the literature of modern "Rationalism," will know that it desires very much more the ending, rather than the mending, of the Christian religion. On the other hand, scarcely less opposition to any real change, even though it be plainly for the better, in Christian doctrine, is offered by vast numbers of sincere but uninstructed and timid believers who tenaciously cling to what they have been always accustomed to believe, and in so doing are dogmatically supported by not a few prominent popular clerics. When to these two pronounced factors in the present religious situation is added a third, namely, the irrepressible growth of those new conceptions of Christian doctrine and practice which go under the general name of Modernism, a veritable whirlpool of conflicting convictions and declarations is created, which shows no signs of settling down, but rather of growing "from more to more."

And yet Jesus Himself did say so plainly, that those who were properly instructed for the purposes of His Kingdom would bring out for use "things new and old." It would seem, surely, according to His intention, that those who only hug the old and scorn the new, and those who gloat over the new and condemn the old, are equally wrong and have great need to learn better. But in all probability it will take a long time, years beyond this generation, before even those who are called by His name, are willing or able thus to learn of Him. Dr. Cadoux has recently said, in his volume on *The Gospel that Jesus Preached*, that—

"We are driven to the conclusion that the only form of Gospel that can be effective to-day must be somewhat as follows: that

because of all that Jesus was, His thought of God may be ours. And we see at once that this replaces the traditional Gospel with one that is very much nearer the Gospel which Jesus Himself preached."

This may serve as a mild but significant and comprehensive statement of what is now undoubtedly the trend of careful thought, among the best instructed Christians and in the most influential churches. The extent to which the replacement of which Dr. Cadoux speaks is coming to pass, varies indescribably. There is, however, no question whatever that what has been so well known as Evangelicalism not only must be modified in the light of to-day, but very real modification is irresistibly though gradually proceeding. With the exception of the pronounced Fundamentalists and some of the smaller religious bodies noticed above as "eccentric," whose obscurantism appears to be quite impregnable, all sections of Christendom are responding in some degree to the modern atmosphere. For every intelligent and honest observer whose eyes are not blinded by the glamour of Romish dogmatic tyranny, there can be no doubt that such responsive adaptation to environment is an absolute necessity, if Christianity is to retain any hold, let alone increase its influence, amidst the growing intelligence of the increasing populations of the future. In order to give some idea of what is involved in the "replacement" of the traditional Gospel adverted to above, it may be well to state, in summary, without any pretence at completeness, or any assumption of finality, but with deliberate succinctness, some of the negations which have now become inevitable; together with the antithetic positives which bring us, in Dr. Cadoux's language, "nearer the Gospel which Jesus Himself preached."

In what here follows, the succinct positive is placed immediately under the negative.

The Bible cannot be regarded as "the Word of God,"

in the absolute sense in which that phrase has been used popularly, and by some public speakers who have insisted upon belief in it "from cover to cover."

The phrase might still be employed, if it were always understood that all that is meant is that it enshrines a progressive revelation, in the course of which are found many representations concerning God and His relations with men, which Christians cannot possibly endorse.

The opening chapters of Genesis are neither literal history nor exact science. Nor can any Christian doctrine be based upon them as such.

They are undoubtedly legendary, and of Babylonian origin; but that does not destroy their value or disprove their inspiration. This is manifest when the pure and lofty Theism of these chapters is compared with their probable sources. Whilst the fact that there never was any such literal "fall" in a garden as the story represents, does not lessen the emphasis there put upon moral freedom and personal responsibility. Jesus Himself never referred to it. •

The representation of the formation of animals and men by separate acts of special creation, is purely picturesque, and is neither true to fact, nor ever intended to be regarded as exact science.

The evidences for the modern doctrine of evolution are summarized above, and whether Darwin's contribution be accepted or not, are sufficient to show that the divine method of creation is by the slow process of development, not such as was supposed in pre-scientific times.

The doctrine of evolution is certainly not necessarily atheistic, or agnostic.

This Darwin himself asserted, and Huxley, his most influential exponent, openly acknowledged, though

himself the coiner of the term "agnostic." It is rather a much grander, broader, sublimer, conception of creation, and far more in accord with all else that we now see and know about the marvels of our own bodies, as well as what is actually taking place before our eyes in the awful immensities of the universe.

The Bible is not inerrant and infallible. It is sheer Bibliolatry to call it so.

There are hundreds of mistakes in the so-called Authorized Version of the English Bible, and none of the other translations is free from error. There are thousands of minor inaccuracies in the original Hebrew and Greek texts, besides numbers of passages, in the former especially, of which the meaning is quite uncertain. But there is neither common sense nor religious value in discussing such a question. No human work is free from fault, and the presence of such inaccuracies in the Bible no more detracts from its spiritual value, than a mole in a mother's face makes her unlovable to her children.

There is no truth or wisdom in declaring the Bible to be "the Book of books."

It is not true; for the Bible is not a book at all, but a library of books, written by many authors under entirely different circumstances, and extending over centuries. These portions are very unequal in their value, and their very variety contributes to the moral and spiritual unity of the whole collection. The Bible is not an inspired book—there is no such thing. The writers were in varying degrees inspired, and their human limitations naturally came into play.

The Christian conception of God is not drawn from the Old Testament, but from the New.

The Christian thought of God is taken from Jesus, not from Moses, or the Prophets. But Jesus Himself

adopted and endorsed much of the Old Testament, which He knew so well. He assumed the greatness and goodness of God as there outlined, together with His holiness and mercifulness. But He fused it all into one clearer, nearer, tenderer, and more comprehensive term—"the Father." That was the only name for God that Jesus used, and—in all its fullest connotation—it is the only Christian thought of Him.

The Christian code of morals and ideal of holy living are not taken from the Old Testament but from the New.

The specific codes of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, together with special injunctions to individuals in the historical books, have no application to Christians, and are only interesting as stages in the spiritual evolution which culminated in Jesus Christ.

The Psalms, for all their spiritual value and significance, are not Christian, either in all their references to God, or to human nature and behaviour.

The Anglican practice of mechanically dividing the Psalms into thirty portions for public use on each day of the month, is as misleading as unwarranted. The Psalms are certainly not the Christian ideal, either of piety towards God, or duty towards man. Their public indiscriminate recitation leads either to the mockery of meaningless words, or to false pretence. Whether in public or private, only those Psalms are fitted for Christian use which are in harmony with Christ's larger representation of the Divine Fatherhood.

The Ten Commandments are not the Christian law—nor, especially, is the Fourth Commandment any obligation for the Christian conscience.

Jesus never made any reference to "ten" commands. His references to "the law of Moses" covered the whole of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and

in the two Great Commands which He so definitely adopted and enjoined, the whole of the Mosaic law was summarized and superseded. Even as, when our children grow up, the many petty prohibitions of the nursery are superseded by the law of love which prevails, and covers all, in a happy home.

The "Church" is not the necessary and infallible interpreter of the Bible.

For one thing, there has never been, nor ever will be, on earth, such a unity of Churches with differing convictions and ideals, as to permit any one of them to call itself "The Church." Nor is there the least possibility of uniformity in their varying interpretations of Scripture. Least of all is there any warrant, other than hierarchical conceit, for one section of the real Catholic Church to set up its interpretations as alone true and authoritative. The Bible is its own interpreter, on precisely the same lines as science; namely, patient study, willingness to unlearn as well as to learn, and pure desire to ascertain the truth through mutual and kindly co-operation.

Amongst the interpretations of Scripture, have been for a long time the doctrines of original sin and total depravity, in regard to human nature. But neither of these is true, and they have no place in Christ's Gospel.

They were manifestly based upon that literal interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis which we now know cannot be maintained. "Original sin" is unthinkable; for there can be no sin apart from free and self-conscious volition. All that can come through heredity is a tendency. This may be both physiological and psychological; but in any case it includes good tendencies quite as really as evil. And in no case are these either virtuous or vicious, without the definite consent of the free agent.

"Total depravity," as predicated for the "sinful race," is total falsity. Leaving out the extreme cases of vileness or passion which history or observation may have supplied—though even in these we are ultimately no judges—we know in ourselves, and we see in our children, as well as in all around us, that to pronounce human nature totally depraved is as false to fact as its doctrinal basis is false to Scripture. It is but one of, alas, many instances in which theologians have "darkened counsel with words."

The "salvation" with which Christianity is concerned, does not consist in escape from future punishment of any kind.

Whatever may be hereafter, the "salvation" of which so much is said in the New Testament, is something which both begins and develops here and now. It may be expressed as truly as succinctly in saying that it is "being saved from the guilt and power of sin." And that will really go into one word, namely, character. Salvation is a matter of character, and Christian character, again, will go into one word, namely, "holiness." If only these terms are thoughtfully appreciated, it is enough to say that salvation is holiness, and in its light death becomes insignificant.

Thus no man is ever "saved," or ever will be, *for* believing anything. He is only saved in and through believing; that is, through the effect of such belief upon character.

In point of fact, no man is, or in this life ever will be, "saved." The term is often sincerely though thoughtlessly used to signify some crucial experience in the past. It is a common evangelical, and specially Methodist, phrase that "I was saved," at such and such a time or place. Really, it is never true. All that then happened was that the individual began,

more or less violently—in accord with the previous manner of life—to live the Christian life. But that was no more salvation than birth is life. Speaking generally, the word of the Apostle in Acts xvi. 31, as rendered in the Authorized Version, has been lamentably misquoted. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” does indeed convey to ordinary hearers that the act of believing is the essence of immediate salvation. But that is the most pitiful and mischievous of heresies and misinterpretations. Moffatt’s rendering ought to be known wherever English is spoken—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you will be saved, you and your household as well.” The salvation is not in the act of belief, but in its consequence. Character cannot come to pass by mere assent to anything; but only through conscious and continual acting upon that assent. The stress lies upon “believe.” When that is real, the rest follows as surely and as naturally as heat from real fire.

Hence no man is saved for the holding of any special creed; or lost, in any sense, for not holding it.

It may be useful to contemplate or recite the “Apostles’ Creed”—bearing in mind, of course, that it did not come from the Apostles—as a general statement of Christian doctrine. But no man is saved, or is a more real Christian, by reason of any particular sense in which he interprets any one of its clauses. As for the so-called “Athanasian Creed,” the damnatory clauses in that incomprehensible collocation of words, are utterly unchristian, and the recital of them in public is an outrage upon Christ’s spirit and teaching. The doctrine of the Trinity is not necessary to Christian salvation. As matter of fact, many Unitarians have been and are more really

“saved” than many Trinitarians, the character which Jesus approved being the test.

The Christian doctrine of the “Atonement,” as generally stated, is neither true nor necessary, but ought always to be spelt At-one-ment.

In view of all the endless discussion on this theme, it must be affirmed that in the full Christian understanding and reverent appreciation of Calvary, there is no warrant for any “satisfaction”—such as occurs in the Anglican Prayer Book Communion service—nor any need for “substitution”—such as is so often assumed in “evangelical” theology. The suffering and death of Jesus were the culmination of His whole life-sacrifice, in proof of the really overwhelming truth of the love of the Father for all men. All notions of appeasing an angry God, or “satisfying” divine justice, are Pagan. Love is a greater condemnation of moral evil than all punishments ever were, or can be.

There was never any need or room to talk of God’s being reconciled to men, however sinful.

“My God is reconciled—His pardoning voice I hear,” is as mistaken as sincere. God no more needs to be reconciled to any sinner than, in the parable, the father needed to be reconciled to his prodigal son. It was the son—it is the sinner—who needed to be reconciled; that is, brought to repentance by the knowledge of the ever-waiting love of his father. That is the true significance of the long misinterpreted word of the Apostle in Rom. v. 11, where, happily, the Revised Version has corrected the mistake of the “Authorized” Version.

In spite of all the common pulpit statements to the contrary, it must be plainly declared that the Cross is not the “central doctrine” of Christianity.

Christianity has no “central” doctrine, any more

than the human body has some one central organ through which we live. The heart may seem to be central; but the soundest heart that ever throbbed could not maintain life for one hour without the brain, or lungs, or nerves. The only thing that is central, as being at the back of all else, is that marvellous reality which baffles all science to define, but which every child knows to be real, and we, in our ignorance, call "vitality." Even so, the Cross of Christ is one of the vital doctrines of the Christian faith, but it would be, as Paul said, worth nothing without the following resurrection; nor indeed without the preceding life and teaching. That which above all else is "central," is what Jesus came to reveal in His life and prove in His death—"The Father Himself loves you." From that flows everything else that is significant and precious in Christ's Gospel.

The Lord's Supper, as instituted by Jesus, is not, and never was, by Him intended to be "the supreme act of Christian worship or devotion."

The exaggerated and overwhelming importance attached to this service by so many believers, is not derived from New Testament doctrine. It comes from the mistaken estimate of His death just mentioned, together with the development of the priestly notions—derived partly from Judaism and partly from Paganism—which so soon marred the tenderly solemn simplicity of Christ's own intention and the Apostle's recommendation. The Jesus of Calvary was the same—no more, no less—as the Messiah who by the roadside so emphasized the universal Fatherhood of God, to the poor woman at the well. And the real disciple who, in equally humble and simple and natural surroundings, comes to the Father "in spirit and in truth," is as near to the heart of God and the love of Christ, as

the most devout of all the communicants who gather with most elaborate form and ceremony, dress and ritual, to "take the sacrament," or "celebrate High Mass." "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is as truly and fully present in the homeliest, sincere "prayer meeting," as in the most numerous and impressive "sacramental service" that was ever held.

There is no Christian warrant for the stress which is so commonly put upon the Lord's Supper as "THE Sacrament," above all else.

Sacraments are of value as "the outer and visible signs of an inner and spiritual grace"; and the two which are held in most Protestant Churches may claim New Testament origin and Christ's own authority. But He gave no warrant whatever for the idea that either of them is necessary to "salvation." That was an ecclesiastical invention, and served to support the notion of a necessary priesthood. Hence sprang the ghastly notion that little children, babes, were "lost," unless a priest had done something for them! So too arose the belief that unless men were immersed in water, they could not be saved. Traces of these notions still continue. Especially that most pitiful of all delusions, the notion that "extreme unction"—a priestly smearing of a dying man with oil—was necessary to procure the love and mercy of God for a mortal being! So far has nominal Christianity wandered from the truth and simplicity and tenderness of Jesus.

As plain matter of unmistakable fact, there is neither need nor warrant in the Christianity of the New Testament for any "priest" at all. The only priesthood acknowledged there, is the one High Priesthood of the Risen Christ, and the true priesthood of all believers.

This adoption of priesthood from Judaism and Paganism, has been the most ruinous misrepresentation that has ever hindered Christ's Kingdom on earth, and is so still. The word for "priest" never once occurs in the whole Greek Testament in reference to a Christian official. The Apostles never used it, either as to themselves or any other. But in spite of everything it grew up with ecclesiasticism, and, thanks to the tenacity of the "clergy," and the ignorance of the "laity," it has maintained its hold through the ages, and is held as firmly as ever throughout the larger sections of modern Christendom. So far have His avowed followers departed from the emphatically expressed intentions of their Master, as to the nature and constitution of His Kingdom.

Out of priesthood naturally grew the rites and ceremonies necessary for its upholding. The most potent and impressive of such means for the maintenance of priestly power came through the sacraments, and, most of all, in the Romish doctrine which changes the natural simple behest of Jesus into sacerdotal magic, whereby what is technically called "Transubstantiation" is achieved. It is the supreme falsehood of sacerdotalism.

It has been sufficiently discussed elsewhere. But the spectacular symbolism of the Mass appeals to the people who do not know better. Whilst those who do know, are bound hand and foot by the "authority of the Church." So is the Gospel of Christ misrepresented, His teaching contradicted, His Kingdom hindered, and the modern world alienated from the Christian faith. Well may one cry—"O Lord, how long?"

There is serious need to repeat continually what Protestants are so content to forget, that Romanism is *not* "Catholicism."

On every possible occasion this false claim is made, and generally passes unchallenged. The Press endorses it because it is necessary to curry favour with all the wealth and influence which Rome yet wields. Protestant teachers, out of sheer carelessness, are content to let the wholesale bigotry and downright falsity which such a Romish monopolization of this great word connotes, constantly pass unnoticed. It is a pity that Protestants are not wiser on behalf of the truth they avow. They ought better to appreciate their name : *Pro te stant Jesu Salvator Mundi*.

Speaking generally, Christianity has no real need of a clerical class at all. In this respect, the Society of Friends and some smaller sections of Christendom are technically right.

But they overlook two great considerations which soon made themselves felt in the early Christian Church. One is spiritual, the other practical. As any Church grows in numbers and influence, it is a matter of common sense that there must be some to manage affairs and prevent disorder ; as also some to teach the truth. Both these demand the service of a whole life, to do efficiently ; hence the Apostolic list in 1 Cor. xii. 28. To such service there must be the inner call of conviction, which may be ratified by the Church as a whole. That is the only kind of " orders " recognized in the New Testament. But it is not the creation of a distinct class or caste ; nor does it confer any kind of superiority upon any man, in any position whatever. The " highest " official is pledged to follow Him who said—" I am among you as a servant." " I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

There is thus no need whatever of any elaborate ritual, or ceremony, or form, or dress, to ensure the

presence of God, with all the promised blessings of Christ's Gospel.

The craving for the spectacular in human nature is undoubtedly vast and ineradicable. But it has no necessary place in the Christianity of Christ. The only reference to ritual or dress in the Apostle's writings is—"Let all things be done in a becoming and orderly way." Out of this plain word to evolve all the pomp and splendour, the gorgeous robes and trappings of assumed superiority, which are displayed in a "procession of clergy," or a "high" Church or Romish public service, is indeed a lamentable as well as unwarranted departure of human nature from the natural simplicity of the Gospel. Radically, it is human pride, camouflaged by exaggerated symbolism.

In true Christian worship there is neither warrant for, nor spiritual advantage in, the ceaseless repetition of what is called "the Lord's Prayer."

In some Anglican services this is repeated twice, or even thrice, on the same occasion, as if there were some special magical efficacy in the use of the words. Whereas this is to do exactly what Jesus in Matt. vi. 7 enjoined upon His disciples *not* to do. In point of fact, these words are not truly "the Lord's Prayer." The New Testament record of that is found in John xvii. The words in Matthew and Luke are not really a prayer at all; any more than A, B, C, are the alphabet. They are but the Lord's lesson in prayer, by giving a few sentences as guide to reality. "After this manner (*οὕτως*), pray ye," said Jesus. Or, as Moffatt renders—"Let this be *how* you pray." But instead of learning the lessons of reverence, simplicity, and reality, which are enshrined in the few great sentences which follow, human nature in the Christian Church has found it easier to repeat the words. In this they

were helped by an early copyist who thought he could improve upon Christ's teaching, and so rounded off with a doxology, in order to make a complete prayer, what Jesus Himself purposely left unfinished as a type of what should follow. It is so much easier, alas, to "repeat the Lord's Prayer," than it is to learn of Him that prayer is not mere "kneeling and begging," as the cynic represents it, but the whole-hearted communion of a child with his Father.

In regard to eschatology, or the Christian doctrine of "the last things," much has to be unlearned and learned. They can only here be mentioned in summary. The full reasons for them may be found elsewhere.

There is for Christ's Gospel no such "hell" as has so long, and oft so luridly, been preached in His name.

The Bishop of Liverpool has just voiced, at the Anglican Church Congress held at Southport (October 1926), the truth herein which has long been felt, and in some quarters expressed. The awful pictures of physical torment which were drawn by "orthodoxy" throughout the ages, were never true; only there was no one who had the knowledge and the courage to contradict them. But for some time now such crudenesses have been disappearing, and the time has come to say plainly that they are a misrepresentation of Christian doctrine. All too long they have served ecclesiastical purposes, or have led well-meaning evangelists to mislead those whom they wished to help. All the dark side of the future after death, however symbolically expressed elsewhere, is truly summed up in the Apostle's warning to the Galatians in Gal. vi. 7.

There is no Christian doctrine of "everlasting punishment," let alone of "everlasting torments," such as used to be so unhesitatingly proclaimed.

No man is or ever has been capable of realizing what "eternity," in the sense of endlessness, means. There is no word in the Greek Testament in relation to the human hereafter, which attempts to convey such a meaning. The use of the term "eternal" in the English, has been very misleading. It is not the simple synonym of "everlasting," but radically is qualitative rather than quantitative. None of the oft-quoted "passages" on behalf of "eternal punishment" justify such an inference, when fairly examined. The whole notion is utterly unthinkable, in the light of Christ's revelation of the universal Fatherhood of God.

Nor is there any more real ground for the doctrine of "conditional immortality," which in some quarters has obtained considerable vogue.

This also, when all its implications are considered, is seen to be unworthy of the character and purpose of God, as represented in the whole message and mission of Jesus.

The counter-suggestion which is known as Universalism, is naturally attractive to all who have learned anything concerning the Divine purpose, from the tenderness and sympathy of Jesus. But it cannot be proclaimed as a Christian doctrine.

The poet's vision—

"O yet we trust that somehow good
Shall be the final goal of ill.

I can but trust that good shall fall
At last, far off, at last to all,
And every winter change to spring,"

is what every Christian would like to believe and hope.
But the price for it cannot be paid. Seeing that it

would involve the loss of personality, without which a future life for human beings is unthinkable. Whilst the reality of personality remains, the human spirits who have passed out of this realm into the unknown, impenitent and content with evil, cannot be compelled, even by love divine, to turn to good. If sin be, as it is, the scorn of known love, compelled love is a contradiction in terms. There we must leave those who take with them out of this life, the bad character which they have spent their life in making. No man, no Church, is their judge, here or hereafter. All we know is that death is a mere physical event which has no necessary effect upon character. What is beyond that, in the possibilities of another larger, wider realm than this, God only knows. It is enough for us that here we are, with full opportunity to do all in our power not merely to enter upon real salvation ourselves, but help others to do the same.

The modern movement known as Spiritualism, or Spiritism,¹ which is now so widely diffused both in Europe and America, does not call for all the ecclesiastical denunciations which have been heaped upon it.

The severest maledictions in this respect come, as ever, from those who know least about what they condemn. Most of the clerical anathematizers have neither studied the subject seriously, nor had any experience from which to argue. But it is certain that there is too much truth and reality in the facts alleged, to permit of this cult being dissolved by any amount of ecclesiastical displeasure. There are plenty of published testimonies as to these facts, and it must

¹ But these names ought to be clearly distinguished. Spiritism connotes only the results of psychical investigation. Spiritualism represents the religion, generally Unitarian, based thereupon.

be plainly stated that if the testimony borne to their actuality does not merit credence, then Christianity goes by the board. For it is wholly built upon testimony which is not one whit more valid than that which leads to the basal conclusions of Spiritism. As Sir Oliver Lodge has said—and others equally deserving of regard—we may be, under proper conditions, assured by actual communion with the departed, that death does not end all and human continuity is a reality. This is fact. Those who from ecclesiastical positions despise and reject such a conclusion, ignore both the attitude of the New Testament and the strength of the modern materialism which is impregnable to all other reasoning, and is only confuted by facts which cannot be denied.

On the whole, it must be reiterated, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, that what is loosely but conveniently and significantly called "Churchianity"—to whatever section of Christendom it may be applied—is not Christianity. The recorded words of Jesus have an everlasting, measureless application, and constitute either the hope or the doom of the Christianity of the future—"Not every one who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does My Father's will." That, and that above all else, will be the test of the only Christianity which will endure.

The foregoing summary specifies but a few of the main reconsiderations which must form part of such adaptation to environment as is absolutely necessary for a living Christian faith in the days to come. These suggestions will doubtless not commend themselves to all who contemplate them. But they will serve their purpose if they lead to further search for the truth which will make men free. The two great final certainties are surely these.

(i) There is no one section of Christendom which holds a monopoly of Christian truth. There is no present representation of Christ's Gospel which is so complete and final that there is nothing more to be learned or unlearned ; or so accurate that "salvation" depends upon believing that, and that alone. If the letters of Paul contain any such real inspiration as to make them authoritative for all Christian believers, then his most emphatic and unmistakable declaration in the "Psalm of love," written to the Corinthians, rules out for evermore any and every attempt in the Christian Church to claim final supremacy for "orthodoxy." The "battle of the creeds" has never helped onward the actual Kingdom on which Jesus laid such stress.

(ii) But when Christianity is acknowledged and contemplated in the light of the "love" which the Apostle describes, so that a spirit of mutual sympathy is blended with simplicity and sincerity, teachableness and charity, there is every reason to hope for its future. A despairing pessimism is as much out of place as an easy-going optimism. The foolishness of the latter is made sufficiently manifest in the preceding pages. But there are also good grounds for abjuring the former. Even such actualities as these. When all allowance has been made for the comparative perversions, failures, and faults, which yet hinder the Kingdom of Heaven as Christ would have it on earth—Christianity is the greatest religion of mankind as to quantity, that is, in numbers of adherents ; as to quality, ethics and spirituality, it may well claim to be the best ; it is more full of hope for humanity than any other faith ; its actual philanthropy—in the widest sense—towards the weak and helpless is absolutely without parallel, either in history or in present-day circumstances ; in spite of all present-day apparent failures from its high ideals, it is as much purer—that is, nearer to the mind of Christ—in

quality, as larger in quantity, than it has ever been before ; even as to its blemishes or dangers, it has always and for ever, its own corrective and safeguard in the New Testament to which it is pledged, and most of all in the character of the " Lord and Master " whose example is unchallengeable ; whether Christian Churches fail or not, it is certain that to be true to Him is the only valid hope for the redemption of civilization from its sins and sorrows, and the further evolution of humanity from the lower to the higher realms of being ; when the end of all human interests and possibilities has to be faced, the Christian hope—rightly understood—is the highest, noblest, and most inspiring that can comfort mourners or " cheer the souls of death afraid."

That such an estimate is not a mere outburst of exuberant pietism, but truth in facts, is best and finally shown in one way only, namely, the characters of the men and women who prove it. Ecclesiastical " saints " are often in many respects disappointing. But saints as the New Testament portrays them—say in Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xiii., Eph. iv., Col. iii., and the like—are, *in very deed to-day*, " the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

That they are at present in a minority, an apparently insufficient minority, may be conceded. And yet we have seen that it is such a modern and worldly-wise prophet as Mr. H. G. Wells who, by the mouth of his *William Clissold*, tells us that he has no faith in the majority ; and that the only hope for his new wonderful revolution lies with the minority. Truly, some nineteen hundred years ago there was in a despised city a minority ; for the record is that—" There was a number of persons gathered together, about one hundred and twenty." A hundred and twenty ordinary, and mostly uneducated, men and women, without wealth or influence, hated by their national brethren, scorned by their ruling powers, regarded by their whole

environment as dangerous fanatics. Could any man then have imagined, let alone have predicted, that this little despised company would grow to 580 millions, and permeate the whole world? But the calm confidence of John was justified and has been verified—"This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." And the strangely strong declaration of Jesus Himself has been proved to be no mere paradox, but actual, undeniable, immeasurable fact—"If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it will remove; and nothing will be impossible to you." For, granted only that the seed is living, then no more in the spiritual than in the natural world will there be measure or end to its development.

As this volume began with an excerpt from Professor Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, and is only a comment upon his pregnant sentence there quoted, it may be corroborative to conclude with his final paragraph in the same chapter. The lapse of more than fifty years since these words appeared has only added emphasis to their truth and force:

"But that Christ's method when rightly applied, is really of mighty force, may be shown by an argument which the severest censor of Christians will hardly refuse to admit. Compare the ancient with the modern world—look on this picture and on that. One broad distinction in the characters of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the ancient heathen world, there were scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the epithet 'holy.' In other words, there were not more than one or two, if any, who besides being virtuous in their actions, were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness; and besides abstaining from vice, regarded even a vicious thought with horror. Probably no one will deny that in Christian countries, this heightened goodness which we call 'holiness' has existed. Few will maintain that it has been exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is,

that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ, where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation, that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so, has Christ failed ? or can Christianity die ? ”

No ! The “ if ” may be omitted. It *is* so. Christ’s Christianity can never die.

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